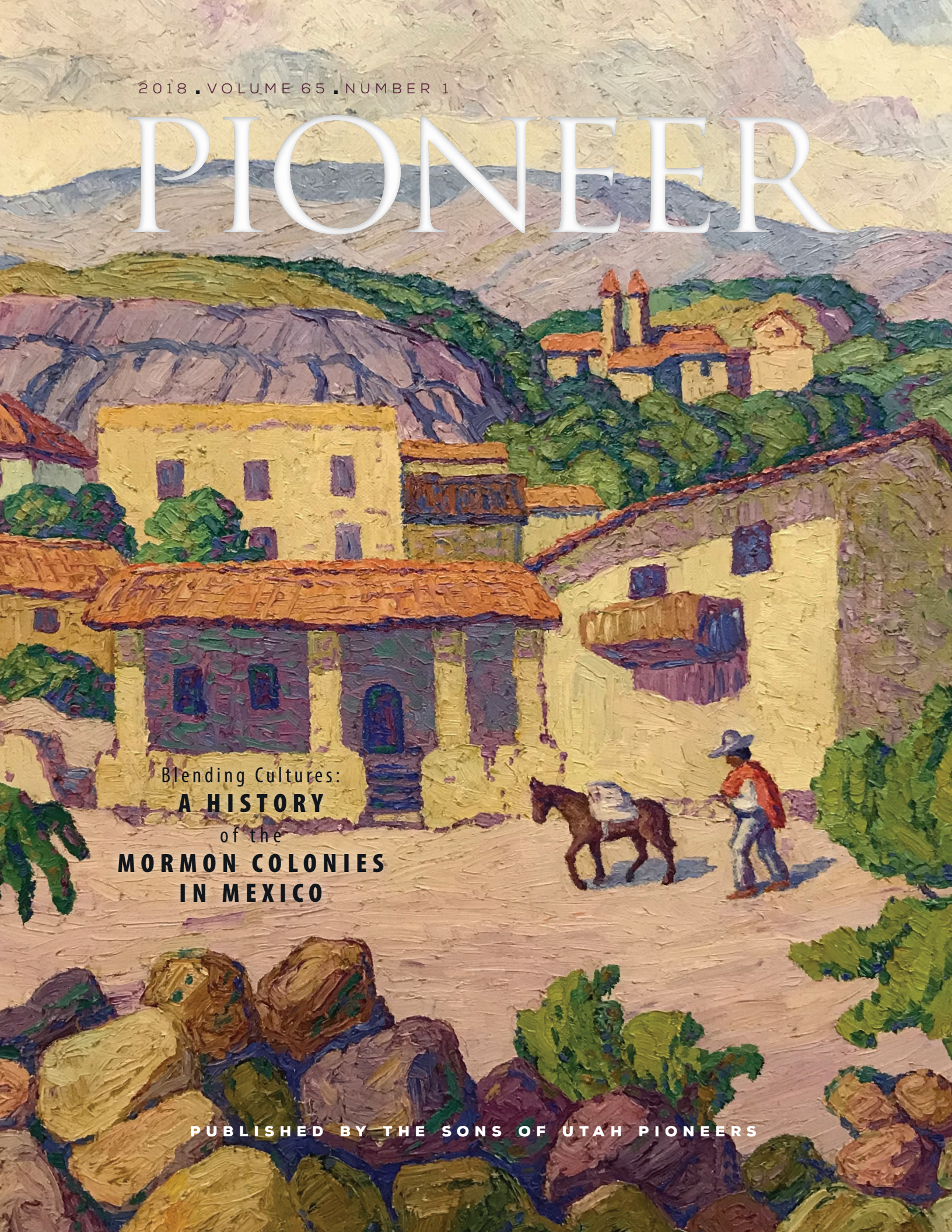
2018 . VOLUME 65 . NUMBER 1

PIONEER



Blending Cultures:
A HISTORY
of the
MORMON COLONIES IN MEXICO

PUBLISHED BY THE SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

2018 . VOLUME 65 . NO 1

PIONEER





FEATURES

2 The Mormon Colonies in Mexico, *by Matthew G. Geilman*

16 A Troubled Decade: The Mexican Revolution

22 Finding Refuge in El Paso: The 1912 Mormon Exodus from Mexico, *by Fred E. Woods*

29 Junius Romney

34 Sarah Ann Lunt 1858–1921, *by Susanne Lunt Peterson*

42 A Faithful Mormon Convert: Toribio Ontiveros, *by Susan Easton Black*

49 A Source of Church Leadership: The Mexican Colonies, *by Kent V. Lott*

50 Juárez Stake Academy: Academia Juárez, *by LaVon Brown Whetton*

56 The Return from Exile, *by LaVon Brown Whetton*

64 The Plan of A Smaller Temple: "It was here in Northern Mexico," *by Kent V. Lott*

DEPARTMENTS

1 **President's Message:** *by Keith Van Roosendaal*

32 **Diary Entry:** Reminiscences of Edward Christian Eyring

40 **Pioneer Vignette:** Anthony W. Ivins, *by Thomas G. Alexander*

COVER: "Glimpse of Taxco, Mexico" *by Birger Sandzén, courtesy Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas.* Sandzén was born in Västra Götaland County, Sweden. An acclaimed artist from Sweden, Sandzén accepted a teaching position in 1894 at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. He remained on the faculty for fifty-two years. His expressionistic artwork has been compared to Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne.

WEBSITE: www.sup1847.com

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

PRESIDENT: Keith Van Roosendaal

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Tony Tidwell

PUBLISHER: Dr. William W. Tanner

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & MAGAZINE DESIGNER: Susan Lofgren

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD:
Dr. Thomas G. Alexander
John E. Elggren, *Past President*
Robert C. Folkman
Dr. F. Charles Graves
Dr. A. Keith Lawrence
Kent V. Lott, *Publisher Emeritus*
Francis A. Madsen Jr.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:
3301 East Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109
(801) 484–4441
Email: SUP1847@gmail.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Pat Cook
Email: nssup3@gmail.com
or go to the website. Annual subscription cost is $25 per year or $45 for two years.

WEBSITE: www.sup1847.com

FINANCIAL: John E. Elggren

MISSION STATEMENT: The Mission of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers is to come to know our fathers and turn our hearts to them; we preserve the memory and heritage of the early pioneers of the Utah Territory and the western U.S.; we honor present-day pioneers worldwide who exemplify the pioneer qualities of character; and teach these same qualities to the youth who will be tomorrow's pioneers.

THE PIONEER VALUES: We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination.

© 2018 National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers®



The Saints' exodus from Nauvoo to the western US began in February 1846, and, under the direction of Brigham Young, the colonization of Deseret Territory began almost immediately upon their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. At Brigham's death in 1877, there were more than 350 Mormon settlements across the American West, and by 1900 this number was approaching 500.

In September 1875 the first missionaries assigned to Mexico were charged with preaching the gospel and locating suitable places for colonization in southern Arizona and New Mexico and northern Mexico. Over the next ten years, between 1875 and 1885, several groups of explorers were sent into Mexico to locate settlement sites and to negotiate with Mexican officials for land.

The passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 intensified federal efforts to incarcerate polygamous Mormon males and to end the practice of plural marriage. The ensuing persecution prompted a regional conference in St. David, Arizona, on January 1, 1885. Convened by Elder Moses Thatcher under the direction of the First Presidency, the conference had the purpose of designating and financing colonization sites in northern Chihuahua, Mexico, as a safe refuge. Beleaguered Saints were soon departing for the valley of the Casas Grandes River in Chihuahua, Mexico. Eventually, land would be procured, and migrations to northern Chihuahua and Sonora would result in the founding of eight major colonies.

Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán were established on the Casas Grandes River. By the early 1900s, Colonia Juárez was a prosperous town of nearly 750 inhabitants where fruit orchards, cattle ranches, a tannery, a shoe factory, and a leather-goods shop thrived. Colonia Dublán was located eighteen miles northeast of Colonia Juárez on a rich tableland whose fertile soil made this area an agricultural center producing alfalfa, wheat, corn, and beans; dairies flourished here and grist mills were built. Sixty miles north of Dublán was Colonia Diaz; Colonia Oaxaca and Colonia Morelos were seventy miles west of Diaz in the state of Sonora. Colonias Pacheco, Garcia and Chuichupa were scattered southwest of Juárez and Dublán in the Sierra Madre Mountains.

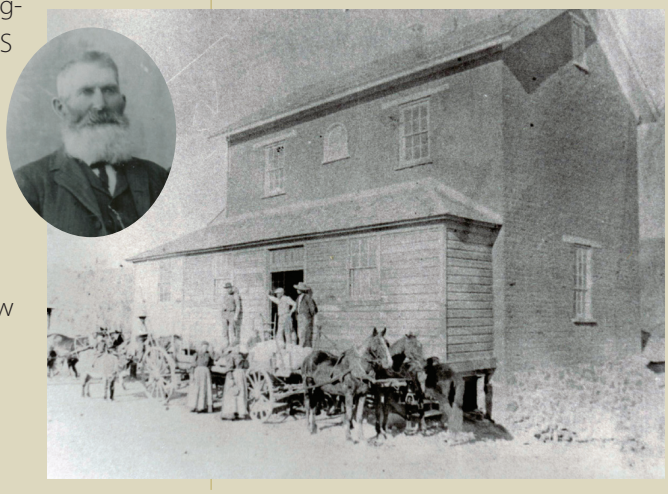
During the Mexican Revolution, Diaz, Oaxaca, and Morelos were permanently abandoned. Pacheco, Garcia and Chuichupa died out over time because of prolonged drought, fire, poor road systems, and a lack of schools. Only Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán survive today, bolstered by better roads and transportation enabling the export of fruit, berries, and vegetables north to the US and south to other states in Mexico.

Today, the threats of Pancho Villa and roaming *banditos* have been supplanted by the new dangers of the illicit drug trade. However, the faithful Saints in northern Mexico remain true to their mission of helping establish the Church in their native land. They are determined that they and their communities will endure as bastions of peace, safety, and goodness.

This issue of *Pioneer* explores the several purposes for establishing Mormon colonies in the northern states of Mexico and discusses the challenges the early Saints faced as they purchased land, settled it, and prepared it for planting before that first winter set in. The hardy colonists had to surmount many challenges over the years including drought and forest fires, depredations from bandits and revolutionaries, and an unstable national government. The following articles portray the resilience and faith of the early settlers, together with the optimistic, enduring commitment of their descendants.

Sources: Lavon B. Whetten, "Colonia Juárez: Commemorating 125 Years of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico," privately printed (2017). Lavon B. Whetten and Don L. Searle, "Las Colonias: Once a Haven, Still a Home," *Ensign* (August 1985).

William Rufus Rogers Stowell's wheat mill in Colonia Juárez, 1889 .

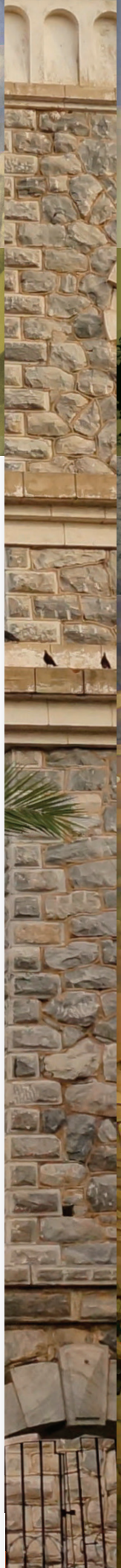


THE MORMON COLONIES IN MEXICO



BACKGROUND ART BY JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO GÓMEZ









BY MATTHEW G. GEILMAN

Church History Department

The Mormon colonies in northern Mexico, like contemporaneous Mormon settlements in Canada, mark a unique moment in Latter-day Saint history when nineteenth-century Saints took the pioneering and colonizing spirit beyond the borders of the United States and established footholds that have blessed the Church for more than a century. Mexico's Mormon colonies,[1] founded near the northern Sierra Madre mountains in 1885, manifest an enduring legacy of faith, sacrifice, self-reliance, and contribution to the kingdom of God. Many members of the Church have ties to the colonies, descended from ancestors who lived there or claiming friends who call the colonies home.

If today you were to cross the border into Mexico from El Paso, Texas—or from Columbus, New Mexico—and then drive southwest about three and a half hours through long rural areas of the state of Chihuahua, you would come upon the first of the still-functioning Mormon colonies, Colonia Dublán. Having passed through a handful of small towns representative of Mexican culture and architecture—with central plazas and archways, bright colors, picturesque shops, signs in Spanish, tortillerías, and ethnic foods and music all around—you would tell yourself that you were several hours into Mexico. Yet as you entered Dublán, you undoubtedly would be surprised by some of its features—the wide streets in

a grid configuration; the beautiful red-brick houses dotting the community. Typical of many American homes of the late nineteenth century, the brick houses might appear to have been plucked from historic Utah towns and hidden away in northern Mexico, preserved from time. You would pause before the beautifully restored Relief Society building (the Culto Verde), a cemetery with the sign "La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días"(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), and a number of large structures, including an old adobe mill—no longer in use but a symbol of past industry and determination. You would see a modern white-brick LDS meetinghouse and, behind it, an elementary school that was once operated by the Church but that now belongs to the community. You would also notice, on the outskirts of town, the thriving peach, apple, and pecan orchards in neatly cultivated rows, evidence of an ongoing labor over several generations. You might traverse old abandoned train tracks leading back to the United States, and you might sense the meaning these tracks once held for many faithful people.

As you departed Dublán you would almost immediately drive through Nuevo Casas Grandes, a city of about 100,000 residents; next would come a much smaller and older community called Casas Grandes, home to the ancient ruins known as Paquimé. And if you left Casas Grandes traveling the rural road heading southwest, you would be on your way to Colonia Juárez. The country feeling of being surrounded by valley farms with mountains in the distance might cause you once again to question whether you were in Mexico.

Then, as you leave valley farms behind and climb further into hills now seemingly covered with orchards, you might draw in your breath as, rounding a bend, you watch a new valley suddenly come into view. Nestled into the foothills is a thriving, cultivated community of gridded streets, red-brick homes, and mature trees. Your attention is immediately drawn to the majestic Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Mexico Temple on a slight rise overlooking the



Anthony W. Ivins home in Colonia Juárez, with Mexican officials and colonists in foreground.

small community. Just below the temple you see a cluster of school buildings forming part of the Juárez Academy, a Church school in operation since 1897 and still teeming with students from Colonia Juárez and surrounding towns.

You might correctly surmise that the natural valley surrounding Colonia Juárez has helped preserve the community as an even more isolated and protected site than Dublán. Again, as in Dublán, you feel you have stepped back in time. You see the old scout lodge (what is left of the first meeting house in Juárez), the swinging bridge, and the tithing house. And high on the hill outside town, you see the original aqueduct used to divert water to the orchards. It still rests on train rails raised upright, and it continues to bring water across the gulley so that trees on both sides of town get needed runoff from the mountains.

If someone were with you in both Dublán and Juárez to attach old homes to families, you might even start to recognize such names as the Whettens, Romneys, Joneses, Calls, Eyrings, and Johnsons. Most of today's colonists are descendants of original settlers; the others, through marriage, have joined their lives to the legacy of the colonies. Although generalizations about contemporary colonists are insufficient and unfair, you might find the colonists to



Mormon homes in Mexico, courtesy Library of Congress.



be self-reliant, hardworking, and independent, possessing dry wit and down-to-earth approaches to life. You would undoubtedly recognize that they are well-educated, capable people who have learned to live with one foot in each of two worlds. Indeed, many have dual citizenship in Mexico and the United States. In one moment, a colonist might be speaking to you in English, sounding as if she were from an average Utah community. In the next, she might be addressing a friend in Spanish, clearly underscoring her linguistic and cultural identity as Mexican.

These colonial descendants of Mormon pioneers have a rich and beautiful history. What one observes today in the Mormon colonies remaining in Mexico is the fruit of seeds planted more than 130 years ago. The history also includes the exodus of colonists to the United States during the Mexican Revolution, the return of colonists following the "exodus," and the eventual building of the temple in Colonia Juárez.

Founding the Colonies: A Dual Purpose

The beginnings of the Mormon colonies in Mexico suggest a paradigm for their entire history, a paradigm emphasizing the purpose and meaning of the original colonies as well as of the colonies' legacy today. During the 1880s the Saints' collective need for places of refuge from the federal crusade against polygamy was clearly a motivating factor for colonizing areas of Mexico and Canada. This factor contributed significantly to the founding and growth of the colonies, especially early on. But from the beginning there were other motivations for


THE FIRST EXPEDITION INTO MEXICO
Wiley C. Jones
Heleman Pratt
D. W. Jones
A. W. Ivins
Jas. Z. Stewart

settling in Mexico, such as missionary work and expanding the reach of Zion. Long term, these were the enduring principles guiding the history and legacy of the Mexican colonies through the present day.

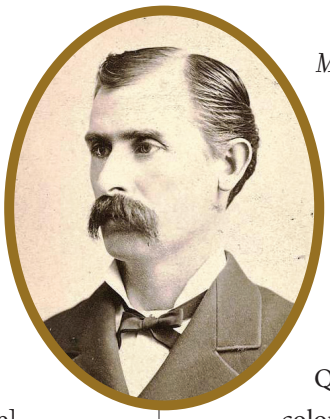
As early as the Nauvoo period, there were indications that the Church eventually would expand south beyond US borders. Brigham Young once stated, "I look forward to the time when the settlements of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will extend right through to the City of Old Mexico, and from thence on through Central America to the land where the Nephites flourished in the golden era of their history, and this great backbone of the American Continent be filled, north and south, with the cities and temples of the people of God."[2]

As the first missionary party into Mexico was organized in 1874, the dual purposes of proselytizing and of establishing colonies became apparent. Brigham told the departing elders "that the time had come to prepare for the introduction of the gospel into Mexico; that there were millions of the descendants of Nephi in the land, and that we were under obligations to visit them."[3] In addition Brigham advised the missionaries "to keep a record of their travels and labors and to report to him any places which they thought suitable to establish settlements, giving a careful description of each, and the advantages they offered."[4] Prior to their departure the missionaries were instructed by Orson Pratt to "look out for places where our brethren could go and be safe from harm in the event that persecution should make it necessary for them to get out of the way for a season."[5]

In preparation for the mission, portions of the Book of Mormon were translated into Spanish,[6] and in 1875 the group of eight missionaries[7] began their journey by horseback from Salt Lake to El Paso and on into Chihuahua.[8] Soon they had convened the first public meeting of the Church in Mexico, mailed copies of Trozos Selectos del Libro de Mormón (Short Selections from the Book of Mormon)[9] throughout the country, and met with political officials, including the governor of Chihuahua, to discuss purchasing land in the territory.[10]

The missionaries carefully fulfilled the responsibility to take note of the places they were traveling through. As one example, when they traveled through the Casas Grandes area on their return trip to Salt Lake—the area where colonies later would be established—one of the missionaries noted, "The town derives its name (Big Houses) from some prehistoric ruins which are near the present village. . . . Some of these ancient buildings must have been large and several stories in height."[11] Wrote another, "Everything points to the fact that at some time in by-gone generations, quite a prosperous community dwelt here."[12] The leader of the missionaries, Daniel W. Jones, recorded that because "the district of country we had been passing through [Casas Grandes] appeared to be the most desirable for colonizing, . . . we made diligent inquiries about lands, titles, [and] conflicting water interests." With notes in hand about what they had learned, the party promptly "reported to Pres. Young on our arrival home."[13]

As Jones had earlier explained to one Mexican official, "Our duty was to travel through the country and visit with and explain to the people our principles and make friends with them, in anticipation that some



Moses Thatcher

of our people would, in time, come into his country and make homes."[14] Jones later observed that those called to Mexico had gone among the Mexican people "with the spirit of true friends and as colonizing missionaries."[15] One of Jones's companions declared, "I felt a desire also on our return to have my family with me and remain among them [the Mexican people], as it seemed as though a work of a lifetime was before us."[16]

Just a few years later, in 1879, as a direct result of the first mission into Mexico, correspondence had opened between John Taylor and a man who had received a copy of the Book of Mormon sent by the original missionaries.[17] The decision was made to send Elder Moses Thatcher, a new member of the Quorum of the Twelve, to dedicate Mexico for the preaching of the gospel and to officially open the nation to missionary work. Elder Thatcher and his companions, James Stewart and Melitón Trejo, traveled to Mexico City and, on November 15, 1879, met in a room of the Hotel Iturbide to offer the dedicatory prayer. In it, he expressed his desire for the Saints to establish colonies in Mexico so that, through their influence, "salvation [might] come to many of the inhabitants of the republic, and especially to the remnants of Israel."[18] Like the earlier missionaries to Mexico, Thatcher believed that if the Church were to spread through that land, colonies needed to be established there.

So strongly did Thatcher and his companions feel about the rightness of this course that Thatcher was sent back to Salt Lake to propose to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve that the Church pursue colonization efforts in Mexico. Perhaps to Thatcher's surprise, Church leaders determined that while Mormon settlements might eventually be established in Mexico, the time for such action had not yet arrived.

Knowing that the news would be difficult for his companions to hear, Elder Thatcher wrote a letter expressing his feelings about why their proposal had been rejected. His words provide a great lesson for anyone who has had a spiritual confirmation that subsequently seems unconfirmed or unfulfilled. "Regarding this matter," he wrote, "I have reflected much since my return. And came to the final conclusion that the Spirit of God prompted us while expressing our views before I left you. But I now understand . . . that when the Elders are inspired to have even a peep into the future, the Holy Ghost[,] by a partial removal of the veil, makes things that may actually, in a natural way, be distant seem very, very close to us. . . . We were only a little overanxious as to time."[19]

THE PAQUIME RUINS NEAR CASAS GRANDES, CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

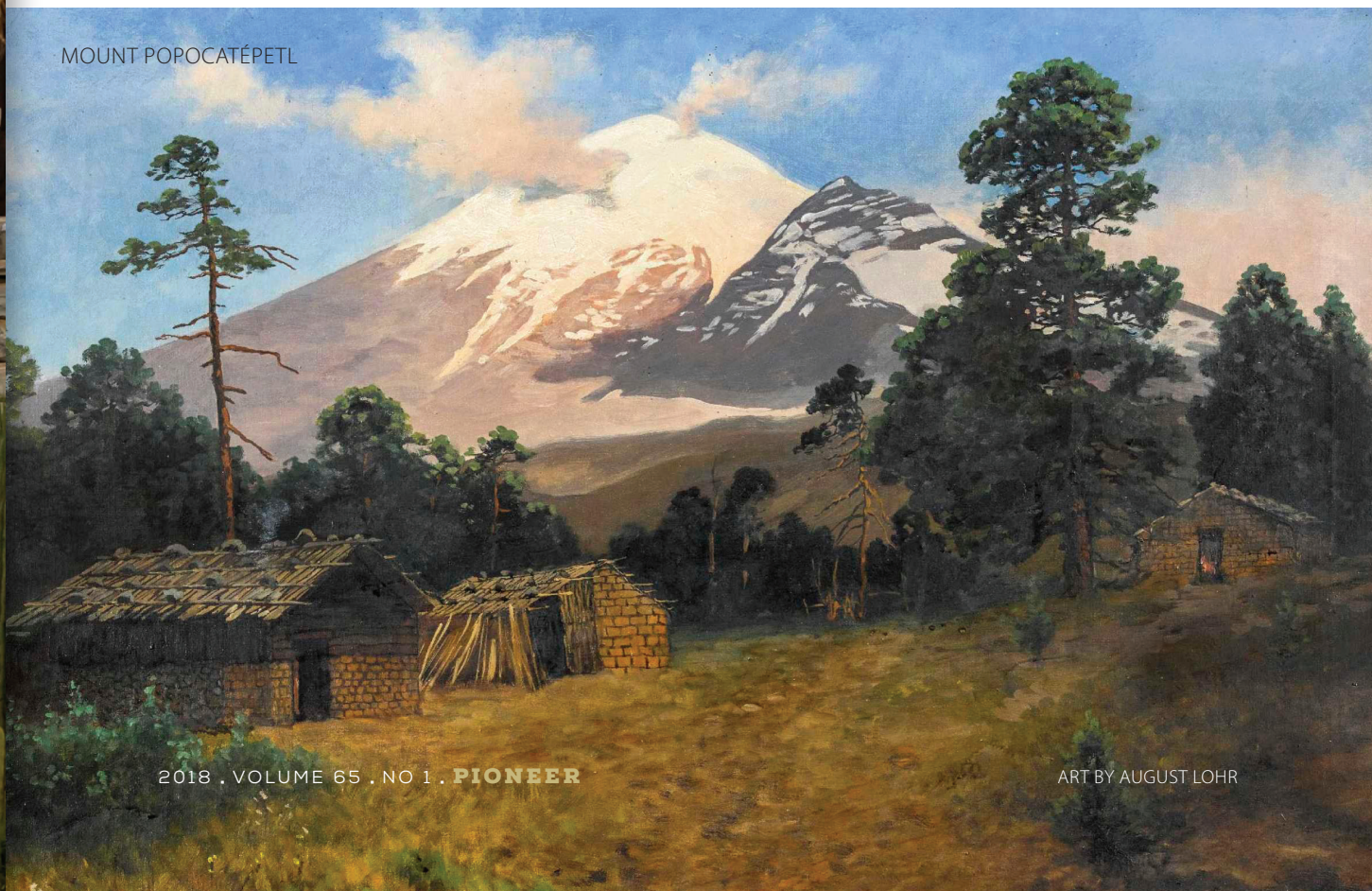


Elder Thatcher returned to Mexico City, and he and his companions met for another prayer, this time on Mount Popocatepetl, to re-dedicate Mexico for the preaching of the gospel of Christ. This time, colonization was not part of the prayer.[20] With the benefit of hindsight, both dedications of Mexico now seem relevant.

By the end of 1884 anti-polygamist persecution in the United States had become so intense that many plural families in the Church found themselves in desperate need of relief. Families seemed at constant risk of being torn apart; removed from wives and children, family heads were being sent to prison. In December 1884 Church leaders in Arizona were assigned via a letter from Presidents John Taylor and George Q. Cannon to look in Sonora or Chihuahua for "a place of refuge . . . to which our people can flee."[21] By February 1885 the first groups of LDS settlers began to enter Mexico, and within a few months hundreds more had crossed the border in search of relief and freedom.[22]

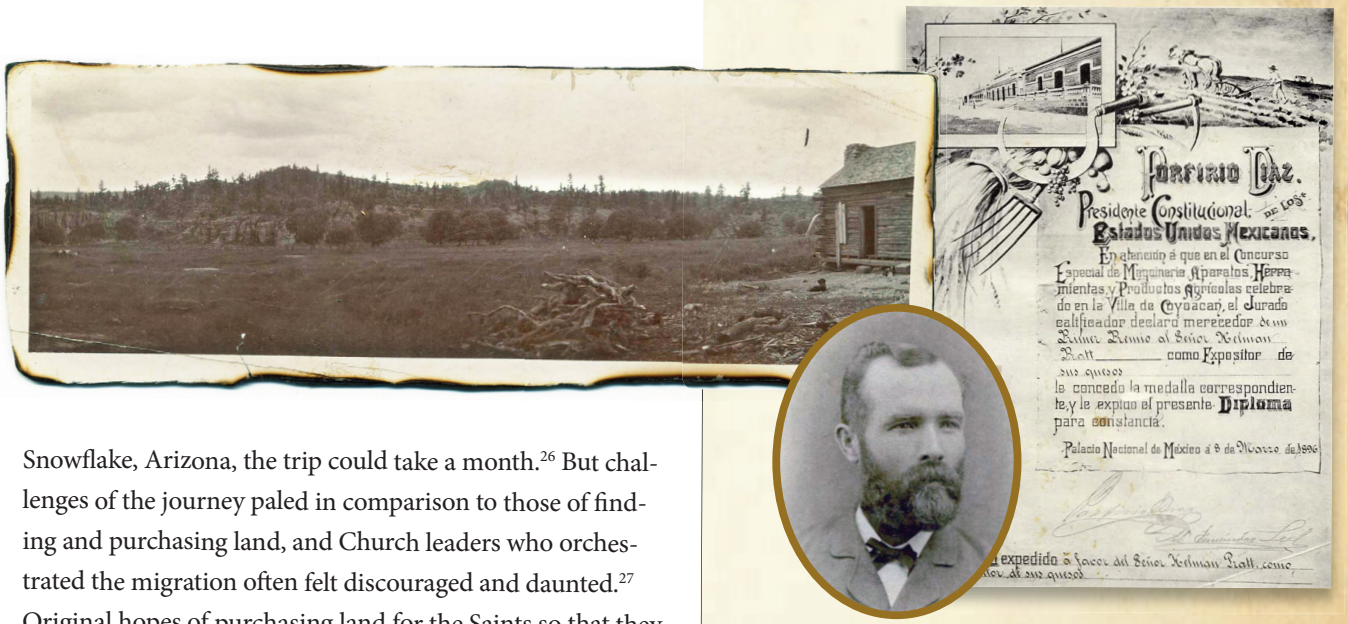
Eunice Steward Harris recorded, "It seemed there were only two courses for us to choose between and be safe. One was to go to Mexico where all the family could go, but where the prospects financially were not very good, or go to Canada where a man could go and live in peace the principle which we had entered at so great a sacrifice together."[23] Of her family's transition to Mexico, Amy Theressa Richardson wrote, "Very soon we set out for Snowflake to prepare for our flight, not into Egypt, but to Old Mexico. I tell you the road was not strewn with roses, neither was it all thorns. Going into a strange land among a different people and a new government was not a sweet dream. But there was a jolly crew of us and we had many good evenings of entertainment on the way."[24]

As LaVon Whetten has pointed out, "The trek to Mexico was certainly not easy. To help put it into perspective, the distance from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, was greater than that covered by the Saints when they traveled from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Salt Lake Valley."[25] Even for those who, like the Richardsons, traveled from



MOUNT POPOCATÉPETL

ART BY AUGUST LOHR



On June 18, 1885 **HELAMAN PRATT** "received a letter from Moses Thatcher stating that Brother Erastus Snow, Brigham Young Jr., and he [Helaman] had been appointed by the President of the Church as an exploring commission to explore the land in Mexico and determine a site that would be suitable for a city of Refuge for the Saints."*

In 1876 Helaman had been one of the first missionaries to Mexico and he and his companions, Meliton G. Trejo and Louis Garff, performed the first Mexican baptisms of the Church at Hermosillo in Sonora. Pratt was later president of the Mexican Mission based in Mexico City from 1884–1887.

He bought a ranch fifty miles away from Colonia Juárez where he raised cattle and pure bred horses with impressive pedigrees. Helaman was known throughout Mexico to have the finest horses and was also known for his cheese. In March, 1896 Porfirio Diaz gave him a gold medal and a certificate stating that he made the finest cheese in Mexico. When the Juárez Stake was organized, Henry Eyring and Helaman Pratt were called as counselors to President Anthony W. Ivins.

**Read more of Helaman Pratt's life by Mary Pratt Parrish,* Jared Pratt Family Association, *online. Helaman Pratt's ranch in Sierra Madres, Chihuahua, Mexico and cheese certificate pictured above.*

Snowflake, Arizona, the trip could take a month.[26] But challenges of the journey paled in comparison to those of finding and purchasing land, and Church leaders who orchestrated the migration often felt discouraged and daunted.[27] Original hopes of purchasing land for the Saints so that they could begin building homes and establishing their lives were soon dashed. Land parcels with clear title were rare, and prospective land deals continually fell through. Repeated official trips by Church leaders to El Paso and Mexico City resulted in little apparent progress. By mid-1885, meanwhile, the number of LDS settlers in Mexico had swollen to several hundred, virtually all of them in temporary camps, and their despair grew as supplies and resources began to diminish. Their greatest fear was that they would be unable to plant crops before the end of the season. Nelle Spilsbury Hatch stated, "Only those who have hoped and waited can know the anxiety with which these pioneers looked for the announcement that the anticipated purchase of land had been finally concluded."[28]

Despite previous agreements made between Church leaders and government officials in Mexico City, at one point local officials issued an expulsion order in response to the alarming number of US nationals entering Mexico. Calamity was averted when Moses Thatcher made an emergency trip to Mexico City to counsel with officials there, but the situation itself evinces the uncertainty and despair of the waiting settlers.[29] After several more weeks dragged by, Erastus Snow was impelled to provide strong encouragement. "Do not any of you think that you or the Presidency made any mistake in your coming here," he declared. "This is a forward movement, and you will stay here and show a willingness to obey the laws of the land. You in this land must not live on each other, but with each other, then you will prosper and be ready for the Savior."[30] Regarding this difficult time, Clarence F. Turley observed, "The Saints were in despair, but with that true pioneer spirit they continued to look to the future with faith," meeting all hardships "with patience."[31]

Finally, by early fall 1885, Mexican lands were secured for the waiting colonists. As LaVon Whetten explains, "A conditional contract had been signed for the purchase of three separate tracts. The colonists were to receive 50,000 acres on the Piedras Verdes River where Colonia Juárez was later founded. In addition, they dealt



for 7,000 acres near La Asension where Colonia Díaz was built, and 60,000 acres, chiefly of timber land, in the Sierra Madres."[32]

As would be imagined, once property was obtained the colonists immediately began preparing land for the coming spring. But not all efforts paid off. The following May, Colonia Juárez settlers faced a challenge that would have tested the grit of the strongest pioneer. After spending the entire spring preparing fields and working within committees to construct a meetinghouse, map out the town, and build a canal, the settlers discovered an error in the survey of their land purchase. They had been working land two miles away from the property they actually owned, merely improving the holdings of one of the largest landholders in the state of Chihuahua.[33] Fortunately, the owner allowed them to stay on the land until their crops were harvested and transported. But the prospect of resettling in the small, narrow, rocky valley to which they were compelled to move did not leave them with much optimism.

Nelle Spilsbury Hatch captured well the feelings of her discouraged fellow Saints as they gathered in prayer at their new townsite, negative feelings soon replaced by divine inspiration enabling them to continue forward: "The Heavy cloud of depression that settled on the spirits of these valiant colonists when they inspected the new townsite, seemed impossible to disperse. That this narrow, rocky valley, little more than a river bed, should be regarded as the 'place prepared' for them was too much for their imagination. Thus depressed, they gloomily bowed their heads at the first gathering to join in a prayer of dedication by Moses Thatcher. But with the first words of the prayer pulses quickened—something stirred within them as they heard that low pleading voice lay their problems before their Maker and ask for strength and wisdom to solve them. As Apostle Thatcher's fervency warmed, and details of their problems were laid bare, it seemed that a conversation was taking place, that the quiet firm voice was speaking to a divine parent. Their spirits were lifted



"INDUSTRIALISM ON A SMALL SCALE GRADUALLY CHANGED THE ASPECT OF THE LITTLE TOWN [OF COLONIA JUÁREZ] TO THAT OF A PROSPEROUS, THRIVING AND HAPPY COMMUNITY."

—Nelle Spilsbury Hatch pictured with her husband, Ernest Isaac. Below right: Colonia Juárez.



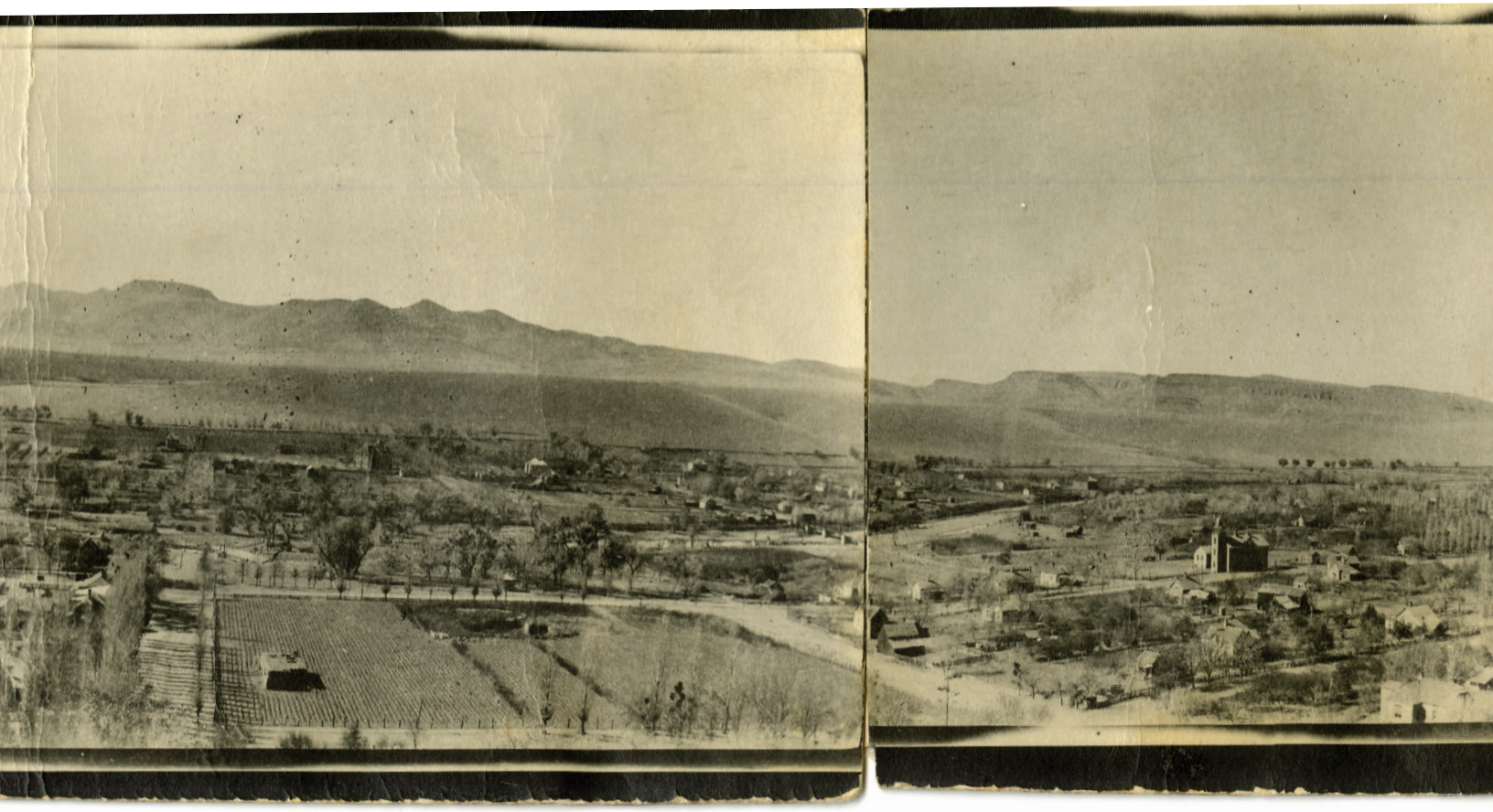
and a new vision opened before them. The 'Amen' was chorused and they looked out on a changed world. Problems somehow seemed vastly shrunken; barriers seemed but challenges which if taken one by one could be hurdled and be the means of gaining additional strength."[34]

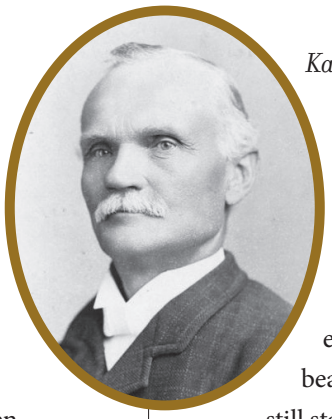
The prayer offered by Moses Thatcher marked a turning point for those present. In many ways, his words—*barriers seemed but challenges which, if taken one by one, could be hurdled as a means to additional strength*—became a kind of thematic rallying point during the years that followed. The settlers in Mexico were establishing themselves in a land far removed from Church headquarters, and they were immersing themselves in a culture, language, and legal system completely foreign

to them. In some cases they were required to farm less-than-desirable land; it was an ongoing challenge to develop strong communities. But they went to work and created something beautiful and enduring.

The industry and vision of these pioneer colonists comprise one of the most inspirational aspects of their story. The settlers outlasted impoverishment and failure—homes and lands lost to persecution, marriage and family threatened by US law, and months of false starts and waning hopes in Mexico—to create prosperous, self-reliant communities in only a matter of years. Nelle Hatch's description of Colonia Juárez is representative of what occurred in all the Mexican colonies: "Capitalizing on natural resources and recognizing individual aptitudes for developing them was the answer. It was not long until the community could boast of a sawmill in the mountains, a gristmill below town, a cattle breeding business with butcher shop, tannery, a shoe and harness shop, and dairy as by-products, a co-op store, a tin shop, and a hotel, besides various minor concerns. . . . Industrialism on a small scale gradually changed the aspect of the little town to that of a prosperous, thriving and happy community."[35]

The themes of making do and, where possible, making better or making new were fundamental to the pioneer spirit with which the colonists of northern Mexico were fully endowed. As noted in a newspaper in Ciudad Juárez at the time, "It may be said that among the 3,000 souls from the colonies of Díaz, Pacheco, and Dublán there is not a single drunkard, gambler or vagabond. The efforts of all are concentrated for their mutual welfare. They have worked like the ants ardently and constantly. They are not land speculators in disguise but people accustomed to the field—laborers—and among them are some artisans who are masters of their professions. They arrive in the Republic with one wagon or two as the case may be, each with its respective team, [and with their] animals [and] their tools and implements of agriculture and industry which constitute the only capital that many of them possess. But they bring with them something of more value than gold or bank notes and that is the love of labor."[36]





Karl G. Maeser

That "love of labor" produced cities, homes, businesses, and agricultural success. Collectively, the Mormon colonies were communities of industry and attainment, receiving awards and recognition for the quality of their produce and commodities at regional and national fairs.[37] By 1890, in Colonia Juárez alone, 17,000 trees had been planted in orchards and for shade, together with 5,000 grape vines.[38]

As in virtually all Mormon settlements, education was a primary gift to the rising generations in northern Mexico. Within a short time of their arrival there, the Saints made provisions to school their children. As was true elsewhere, the first classrooms were rudimentary and temporary, but these were soon replaced by comfortable and more permanent structures. In November of 1892, Karl G. Maeser, often called the father Church schools, "visited the colonies and adopted the schools at Colonia Juárez, Colonia Díaz, and Colonia Dublán into the General Church School system."[39] By 1897 the Juárez Stake Academy was created to provide additional educational opportunities beyond the elementary grades, and then in 1905 a beautiful new building was erected, which still stands today as the central building on the Church-owned campus.

Prosperity, the Mexican Revolution, and the Aftermath

In the end, nine colonies were established: "the plateau colonies of Juárez (for Benito Juárez) [1885], Díaz (for Porfirio Díaz) [1885], and Dublán [1888]; [and] the mountain colonies of Cave Valley [1887], Pacheco (for Díaz's minister of war who had been so friendly to Moses Thatcher) [1887], Garcia [1894], and Chuichupa [1894], all in the state of Chihuahua; [and] the semi-tropical colonies of Oaxaca [1893]





and Morelos [1899]" in the state of Sonora.[40]

From 1885 until 1912 the colonies grew, developed, and experienced prosperity and general security, with their total population reaching as high as 4,000.[41] But by 1912, the political environment of Mexico had changed drastically as the country had become engulfed in revolution. Rebellion forces overran the very areas where the colonies were located, placing settlers in continuous peril and difficulty. Although they initially sought to endure the risks and maintain their homes and property, the settlers faced escalating danger. Not only were they losing land and produce to the rebel forces, they were forced to give up firearms and ammunition as well. At this point, local Church leaders determined to evacuate women and children immediately to El Paso. Shortly thereafter the men were also forced to leave their hard-won homes, lands, and belongings.

The following years were turbulent and challenging ones for Mexico. Ongoing revolutionary conflicts made life in Mexico difficult, and many of the original Mormon settlers never returned, choosing instead to rebuild their lives, once again, in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and even as far north as Canada. Indeed, some of the forces that had impelled them southward to Mexico had disappeared during the twenty-five years of their settlement. Plural marriage was no longer practiced by the Church,[42] and the need for refuge from discriminatory law had evaporated. This, combined with uncertainties of life in Mexico, initially appeared to draw this chapter of Church history to a close.

But a relatively small group of the colonists, ultimately just a few hundred in number,[43] refused to let what they had built slip away and returned to their homes, some within weeks of the original exodus of 1912. Clearly, these colonists faced very real and constant challenges and dangers. There were perpetual conflicts with Mexican troops, both rebel and Federal. The colonists even had brushes with the infamous Pancho Villa and lived to tell the tale.[44] Truly, they weathered storms that few would be able to endure.

Nevertheless, the colonies in Sonora were abandoned in the years following the Mexican Revolution. In Chihuahua, Colonia Díaz had been burned to the ground during the fighting and was never rebuilt. The isolation of the mountain colonies—their distance from good schools, doctors, and businesses—made continuation difficult and growth impossible.

In the end, Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez were the only two that endured. To this day, they stand as witnesses of pioneer spirit, industry, and faith. The layout of each community, their red-brick homes, their modern-day pioneers who still call the colonies home—these are vestiges of the past. But they also underscore the colonies' bright present of new buildings, advanced agricultural practices, fruit co-op installations, and modern schools.

The colonies in Mexico have produced numerous missionaries, mission presidents, temple presidents, and General Authorities—faithful men and women who have served throughout Latin America and the world. The colonies in Mexico were conceptualized with a dual purpose—as launching points for missionary work in Mexico and Latin America and as places of refuge. Over the last century and more, the story of the colonies evinces the fulfillment of both purposes. They have been a refuge for a self-reliant, Zion people who have tirelessly proclaimed the gospel abroad.[45]

It was on a trip back to El Paso from Colonia Juárez that President Gordon B. Hinckley received the revelation about building small temples, a revelation which has blessed the entire Church.[46] One of those small temples now graces the very place that invited the revelation. Perhaps the Colonia Juárez Temple is the greatest witness to the commitment and faith of pioneers who pushed beyond the United States border to fulfill foundational prophecies of a worldwide Church. In this sense, the hilltop temple in



Colonia Juárez is a beautiful symbolic bridge between the rich past and the bright future of the Mormon colonies in northern Mexico.

1 Several helpful books have been written by individuals from the colonies including Nelle Spilsbury Hatch, *Colonia Juárez: An Intimate Account of a Mormon Village* (1954), Annie R. Johnson, *Heartbeats of Colonia Díaz* (1972), Thomas Cottam Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (1938; reprinted 2005), Clarence F. and Anna Tenney Turley, *History of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico: The Juárez Stake, 1885–1980* (1996), and LaVon Brown Whetten, *Colonia Juárez: Commemorating 125 Years of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (2010).

2 Brigham Young to William C. Staines, 11 Jan 1876, Letterbook 14:124–26, as cited in Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (1985), 382.

3 Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians: A True Yet Thrilling Narrative of the Author's Experience among the Natives* (1890), 220.

4 James Z. Stewart, report "written by Elder James Z. Stewart, one of the first Latter-day Saint Missionaries to Mexico,"



Manuscript History and Historical Reports: Mexican Mission, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

5 Stewart, report.

6 The original translation of the Book of Mormon into Spanish was a partial translation of only a hundred pages or so (see n. 9).

7 Daniel W. Jones, his son Wiley C. Jones, James Z. Stewart, Helaman Pratt (son of Apostle Parley P. Pratt), Robert H. Smith, Ammon M. Tenney, and Anthony W. Ivins

8 Originally the missionaries planned to enter the state of Sonora, but local residents informed them of ensuing battles among the Yaqui Indians there. Thus, the missionaries went further east to Texas and down into Chihuahua (Jones 250).

9 *Trozos selectos del Libro de Mormon; que es una narracion escrita por la mano de Mormon, sobra placas tomada de las placas de Nephi . . . . Traducido al Ingles por Jose Smith, Jun. Traducido al Espanol por Meliton G. Trejo y Daniel W. Jones.* Impreso para Daniel W. Jones en imprenta del *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 1875.

10 Jones 277.

11 Anthony Ivins, Journal, 12 May 1876, Church History Library.

12 James Z. Stewart, Journal, 12 May 1876, Church History Library.

13 Jones 290.

14 Jones 268.

15 Jones 288.

16 Report on mission, 5 October 1876, Manuscript History and Historical Reports: Mexican Mission, Church History Library.

17 For information about the conversion of Plotino C. Rhodakanaty, see F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (1987), 34–5.

18 Moses Thatcher, Journal, 4 December 1879, BYU Digital Collections, 2:48.

19 Moses Thatcher, Letter to James Z. Stewart, 5 April 1880, James Z. Stewart Collection, Church History Library.

20 See Moses Thatcher, Journal, 6 April 1881, BYU Digital Collections, 3:39–40.

21 As cited in Romney 51.

22 Tullis 54.

23 Eunice Stewart Harris, "Autobiography," 26, as cited in Tullis 55. Canada as a haven for plural families was a short-lived phenomenon. Plural families were among the early settlers of Alberta in 1887, but the Canadian government had outlawed polygamy by November 1888.

24 As cited in Johnson 20.

25 Whetten 11.

26 Turley 25–6.

27 Elders Brigham Young, Jr. Erastus Snow, Moses Thatcher, Francis M. Lyman, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, and Moses Thatcher were all closely involved (Turley 27).

28 Hatch 17–8.

29 Romney 57–9.

30 Turley 36.

31 Turley 36, 29.

32 Whetten 16.

33 Hatch 23–24.

34 Hatch 25.

35 Hatch 29.

36 From an article published in the "Revista Internacional" of Ciudad Juárez, as cited in Romney 71.

37 Hatch 105–111.

38 Turley 43.

39 Whetten 29.

40 Tullis 56.

41 Ibid.

42 For the subject of plural marriage in the colonies, see Barbara Jones Brown, "The 1910 Mexican Revolution and the Rise and Demise of Mormon Polygamy in Mexico," in *Just South of Zion,* eds. Jason H. Dormady and Jared M. Tamez (2015) 23–38.

43 Romney 235.

44 Whetten 57–59.

45 For one example of unity in the colonies, see Daniel L. Johnson, "Becoming a True Disciple," October 2012 LDS General Conference.

46 Dell Van Orden, "Inspiration came for smaller temples on trip to Mexico," *Church News,* 1 Aug 1998; Richard O. Cowan and Virginia Hatch Romney, *The Colonia Juárez Temple: A Prophet´s Inspiration* (2009).

A TROUBLED DECADE:







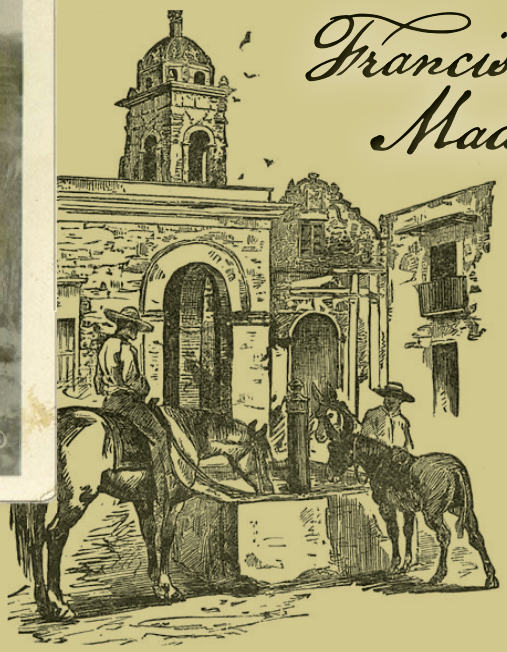
Porfirio Díaz

PAINTING OF THE ENTRANCE OF GENERAL PORFIRIO DÍAZ TO PUEBLA BY FRANCISCO DE PAULA MENDOZA

The Mexican Revolution







Before Mexico became independent of Spain in 1821, it was part of New Spain, which encompassed all western North America from what is now Utah, Nevada, and California south to the Isthmus of Panama, including Texas and New Mexico. Mexico won its independence after a series of insurrections and political compromises that began in 1810 and continued until 1821. Almost exactly a century later, Mexico again experienced a transformative revolution, but this time the rival factions were all Mexican.

Mexico's first century of independence included periods of political turmoil and civil war, several constitutions, and the loss of lands in the north to the United States. The French invasion in 1862 caused massive destruction in the countryside and destabilized the government, but it also brought Porfirio Díaz to prominence. Díaz, a hero of the conflict with France, helped unite the country and bring about a measure of political stability beginning in the late 1880s.

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, Díaz's aristocratic and oppressive reign as Mexico's president had become a dictatorship.[1] Díaz catered to foreign interests who owned much of Mexico's infrastructure, and to a landed elite who owned much of the land in the countryside. Most Mexican citizens—especially outside the largest cities—were overwhelmingly poor and felt disconnected from a central government that ignored their plight. Local leaders began to oppose the increasing ineffectiveness of the Díaz regime and found willing support from the peasantry in many areas of the country.

After Díaz' 1906 reelection, Francisco Madero, a wealthy landowner from northern Mexico, made the decision to oppose the president in the 1910 election. He wrote a book called *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* which



became widely circulated, and his followers—called the *Maderistas*—formed an opposition political party. Madero campaigned throughout Mexico in 1909 and early 1910 and drew substantial popular support. But early in April the government arrested Madero and held him in prison until after the July election. Thousands of Madero supporters were also arrested, and in July Díaz claimed victory in the election and the Congress confirmed his reelection.

Madero concluded that only an armed rebellion would be able to remove Díaz and his government, and after being released from prison he fled across the border to Texas to organize an uprising. He enlisted the support of local and regional opposition leaders, including Pascual Orozco and José Doroteo Arango Arambula (better known as "Pancho Villa"). Madero began an armed resistance in Casas Grandes, the center city of northern Chihuahua. The rebellion drew nationwide support and attracted opposition leaders from throughout the country to its ranks. This uprising in 1910 swelled to become the Mexican Revolution and had far-reaching effects on Mexico's future. During the next decade more than one million people would leave Mexico for the United States.[2] The Revolution would also have dramatic consequences for the settlers in the Mormon colonies of northern Mexico.

Madero and the other leaders of the revolution found willing volunteers to serve in their armies by promising democratic elections, laws barring the reelection of the president, and reform of the country's land ownership. The rebel soldiers, though untrained and undisciplined, were successfully forged by their charismatic leaders into several independent armies that were primarily united by their opposition to the Díaz dictatorship. They were also resentful of foreign influences on Mexico and in agreement that Mexico should develop its own national identity by freeing itself from the economic and political influence of the US and other foreign powers. But these same rebel leaders were often divided by conflicting political philosophies. Some factions hoped for a US-style democratic government, while others focused on radical agrarian reform and land redistribution. Still others saw socialism as a panacea for the nation's ills. Nevertheless, the rebel armies won several regional battles with government troops and a decisive victory in the spring of 1911 that forced Díaz to resign and leave the country. A new election was held in the fall of 1911, and Francisco Madero was overwhelmingly elected president.

Madero had never previously held elected office and was not experienced in military or political matters. His government sought to establish democratic rule, and Madero surrounded himself with intellectuals and advisors who agreed with his ideals. But the government was slow to enact expected changes, and Madero failed to address such popular issues as land reform and economic growth. Thus, Orozco, Villa, and other revolutionaries continued to resist the government, and Casas Grandes, situated near most of the Mormon colonies, seemed always to be a center of rebel activity.

Pancho Villa











Enlisting the support of opposition leaders, including "Pancho Villa," Madero began an armed resistance in Casas Grandes, the center city of northern Chihuahua. This uprising in 1910 swelled to become the Mexican Revolution.



Following the Ten Tragic Days, "La Decena Trágica," in Mexico City between February 9–19, 1913, a coup d'état resulted in the assassination of President Francisco I. Madero, and his Vice President, José María Pino Suárez.

The Revolution had widespread support in the countryside of Mexico, but of course, the soldiers had to be fed. Rebel troops foraged for supplies, horses, arms, and money, confiscating what they needed from foreign-owned businesses, foreign residents and government loyalists. Americans were especially vulnerable because the US government was felt to have been a supporter of the deposed dictatorship. The Mormon settlers in northern Mexico had necessarily maintained good relations with the former government, and so they too suffered the consequences. Thousands of Mormon colonists were forced to leave their homes and livelihoods in July 1912 and escape to the United States.

Some historians have suggested that the Mormons' problems in Mexico were related to their religion, but there is little evidence to support such claims. What is clear is that the Latter-day Saint settlements were conspicuous for their prosperity and stability. The Saints' farms, ranches, businesses, and schools thrived at a time when nearby cities populated by Mexican citizens were dreadfully poor. Jobs were scarce and wages were low. The government provided few services to most of its citizens. It was inevitable that the Mormon settlements would become targets of rebel groups who were forced to live off the land.

Fewer than fifty Mormons remained in the colonies immediately after the exodus in July 1912. But by September—harvest time—several hundred had attempted to return to their property, which in many cases had been cared for by Mexican employees while the families were gone. Because the Revolution was still ongoing many of these Saints gave up and left Mexico again. A comparative few remained and managed to stay safe. Of the nine original Mormon settlements, only Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez continued as predominantly Mormon communities.

Continuing rebel activity throughout the country threatened the success of Madero's presidency, and so he called on General Victoriano Huerta to lead the Mexican



Mexican rebel leaders (L to R): Pascual Orozco, Emiliano Zapata, Venustiano Carranza, and Álvaro Obregón

army against the rebels while Madero himself worked to implement democratic reforms. But Huerta soon conspired with other disaffected leaders, and in February 1913 he and his troops along with military factions still loyal to the Díaz government forced Madero from office and arrested him. Less than two weeks later, military escorts transferring President Madero, the vice president, and Madero's brother to prison assassinated their prisoners. This added fuel to insurrectionist fires, and the uprisings dragged on. Madero's name became a rallying cry of revolutionaries against the new government, now headed by General Huerta.

Over the next several years, the Revolution against the central government continued. Rebel leaders—including Villa and Orozco as well as Emiliano Zapata, Venustiano Carranza, and Alvaro Obregon—allied themselves with first one and then another rebel faction and sometimes even with Huerta, the dictator president. During 1913 and 1914 Villa's forces defeated Huerta's federal army in key battles, forcing Huerta to resign and leave the country. Carranza declared himself president but did not have wide support until he negotiated the removal of US troops from the state of Veracruz where they had been stationed to protect American interests.

Carranza, now with the support of Obregon, defeated the armies of Villa and Zapata in separate battles in 1915, enabling Carranza to be seated in Mexico City as the official head of the government. In October of that year the United States officially recognized Carranza as Mexico's head, angering Villa who had thought of the US as an ally. Rebel forces continued to resist the new government. In 1916 Villa's army attacked a passenger train in northern Mexico and killed many of its passengers, including 21 Americans. Villa then raided Columbus, New Mexico, attempting to secure arms and supplies, but was driven back by US cavalry forces stationed there. While nearly twenty American soldiers and civilians were killed during the raid, Villa lost as many as a hundred men in the battle. Villa claimed victory based on having secured a large supply of weapons, but the consequences of the raid marked the beginning of a decline in Villa's power.

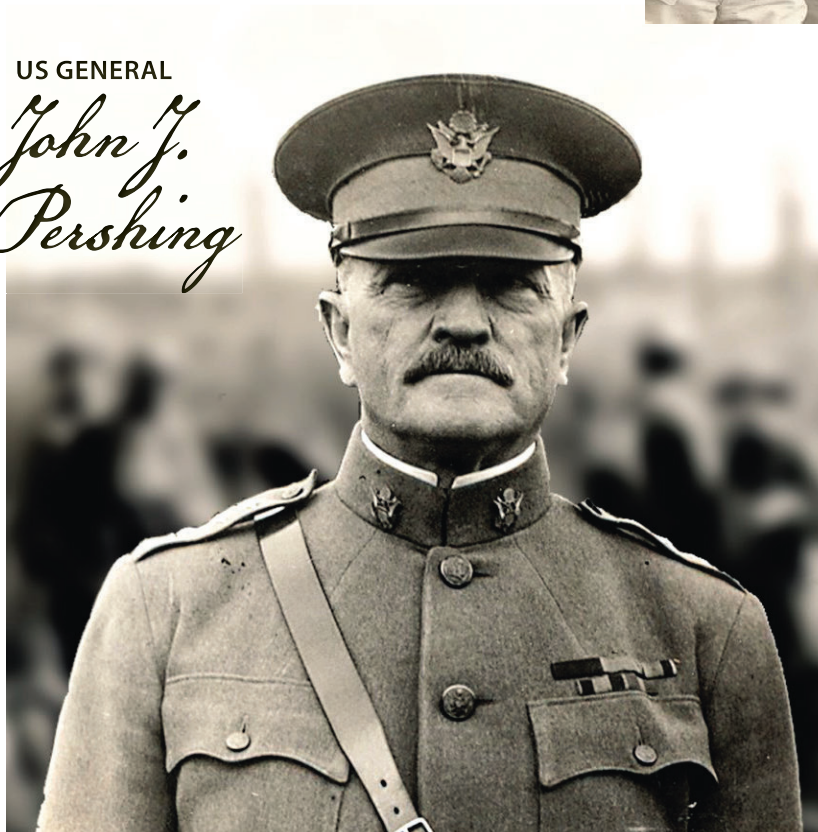
In response to Villa's attacks, the US sent General John J. Pershing and 10,000 troops into Mexico to defeat and capture Villa. In spite of victories in skirmishes with Villa's forces, Pershing failed to capture the rebel leader or completely defeat his army. When the US entered World War I and sent troops to Europe in early 1917, Pershing and his troops left Mexico, but neither Mexican leaders nor rank-and-file citizens soon forgave what they saw as an American invasion and an affront to Mexican sovereignty.



In mid-1917 a new constitution was agreed upon in Mexico City, and Carranza was democratically elected Mexico's president. Still the Revolution continued, with Zapata and his army fighting

US GENERAL

John J. Pershing







General John J. Pershing and Lieutenant James Collins crossing the Santa Maria River in Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa, 1916.



General John J. Pershing led American troops into Mexico on March 14, 1916 for the eight-month long Punitive Expedition, also known as the Pancho Villa Expedition, to defeat and capture the revolutionary general. The Mexican revolutionary was retaliating against a U.S. arms embargo by leading raids that killed American citizens in Mexico and New Mexico.



government troops in the southern state of Morelos and Villa leading resistance in the north. By 1918 rebel resources were running thin, and the government was becoming stronger and more unified. Villa's last stand was at Juárez in 1919, a region where he previously had enjoyed several victories. But this time he was defeated, and Zapata was assassinated a short time later. In 1920 Alvaro Obregon supported a revolt against Carranza, and Carranza was killed while escaping from Mexico City to Veracruz. Obregon was elected president of the nation shortly thereafter, and the ten-year Mexican Revolution ground to a standstill.

Obregon allowed Villa to return to a ranch in his native Chihuahua in northern Mexico, where he remained until 1923. That year, Villa again tried to galvanize forces against the central government, but he was assassinated only months later—perhaps by political enemies, perhaps by government operatives. Obregon completed his four-year term of office in 1924 and was the power behind his successor as president. But after running for president again in 1928, he was assassinated by a supporter of a Catholic-influenced movement opposed to secular governance of the country. With his death, nearly all the leaders of the Mexican Revolution had passed from the scene, and Mexico could begin its transition to a more stable and democratic nation.

Bob Folkman and BYU professors Dr. Keith Lawrence and Dr. Ignacio Garcia contributed to this article.

1 In 1876 Diaz had forced Mexican president Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada from office, and from 1877 until 1880 Diaz served as president. Since he had pushed the government to pass legislation preventing a president from being reelected, Diaz could not run again until 1884. After winning that election and bringing peace to the nation, the law was ignored by the government, and Diaz was reelected five additional times, the last time in 1910 despite widespread charges of fraud.

2 Robert C. Oberfelt, "Mexican Revolution," *Handbook of Texas Online*

THE 1912 MORMON EXODUS FROM MEXICO



FINDING REFUGE IN EL PASO





BY FRED E. WOODS

Mormon Migration to and from Mexico[1]

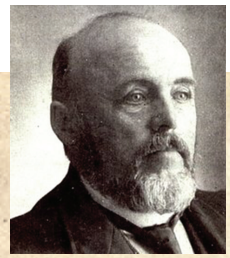
Thousands of Latter-day Saints left their homes in Utah and Arizona in the late nineteenth century and settled in a region in northern Mexico that was said by locals to be "so dry even the lizards wore canteens." This unexpected migration to Mexico was the result of laws passed in the United States that were intended to end the practice of plural marriage by requiring polygamous husbands to abandon all but one of their wives and families. That was a situation many Mormon families found unacceptable.

Persecution against Mormon polygamists had become so unpleasant by 1884 that President John Taylor counseled the Arizona Saints to go into Mexico if conditions became unbearable.[2] In September of that year, Elder Erastus Snow told the Saints in St. Johns, Arizona, that a move to Mexico had been "put upon me to do before President Young's death. He felt to stretch out in this direction." Brigham's successor, John Taylor, also reminded Church members four months later in Snowflake, Arizona, of Joseph's vision that Zion would occupy "all of North and South America."[3] Thus, moving across the border seemed to be both an opportunity to escape harassment and prosecution for polygamy and, in fulfillment of prophecy, to expand colonization efforts characterizing Mormon settlement in the West.

As 1885 dawned, President Taylor sent an exploring party to Chihuahua to look for possible sites in northern Mexico for the Mormons to colonize. Shortly thereafter, President Taylor decided that the core for this southern gathering place would be in the Casas Grandes area in the state of Chihuahua.[4] Joseph B. Romney noted that between 1885 and 1906 "nine major Mormon colonies were established in the two northernmost Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora."[5] The Mexican desert blossomed around the new Mormon colonies and the settlers enjoyed peace and prosperity for more than two decades until the Mexican Revolution brought sudden changes.

The Mexican Revolution was not a singular event with clearly defined beginning and ending dates. The Mexican government had evolved into a repressive and self-serving dictatorship that ignored the needs of the people and rewarded the wealthiest of its citizens. The common people were mired in poverty and hopelessness. These circumstances inevitably led to the rise of local leaders in opposition to the central government. While they came from diverse backgrounds and often had conflicting philosophies, the rebel leaders easily raised volunteers to serve in their armies by promising political reform and economic improvement. Open rebellion began after the corrupt elections of 1910, and found fertile ground in northern Chihuahua state, which included most of the Mormon colonies. While relatively isolated geographically, the Mormon settlements were very visible for their prosperity. By early 1912 rebel bands had raided the Mormon communities several times, stealing guns, horses, cattle, and supplies. A few Saints had been killed while defending their property. It was the rebel forces' demand that the Mormons turn over all





John Jakob Walser



Edson and Catherine Porter

their weapons that ultimately led stake president Junius Romney to instruct the Saints to leave Mexico.

John Walser—a settler in Colonia Juárez—wrote in his journal in April 1912, "My family are well, and we feel grateful to God for His great blessings, and protection over us. Colonia Juárez looks like a flower garden. The fruit trees all blossoming." However, in his next entry, recorded less than three months later, on July 28, Walser declared, "We were compelled to deliver up our arms to the rebel forces, in consequence of this we sent our wives and children to El Paso."[6] This same abrupt turn of events is attested to by seventeen-year-old Willard Whipple, who seemed amazed by "how fast things were happening." He wrote, "I had played violin in an orchestra for a dance in the Juárez Stake Academy celebrating the 24th of July"—and then notes that, within four days, the exodus by rail had already begun and that the Saints were already pouring into El Paso.[7] Hyrum Albert Cluff hints at the profound emotional shift accompanying these sudden changes in fortune. "July twenty-fourth," he writes, "we held a dance and had quite a good time. July twenty-eighth, we received word to leave our homes. We spent the twenty-ninth packing what few things we could take and cooking. We just walked out and closed the door and left everything."[8]

Departure to the Rail Stations and Train Travel North

The women, children, and men in the first wave of the forced exodus traveled from Mexico by rail, not by wagon or on horseback. The journey to El Paso was relatively brief and comfortable; it was the uprooting and the separation from home, family members, and community that was difficult and painful. Trains carrying the Mormons from Chihuahua departed from Casas Grandes and Pearson. These were commissioned trains departing at unusual hours—in the middle of the night, for example—to help the Mormon settlers avoid trouble and escape more easily. The first train left in the very early morning of July 28, 1912, and other trains followed through the first days of August.

Like Walser, Cluff, and others, Catherine Aurelia Carling Porter also captured the abrupt nature of the sudden forced exodus by rail: "The Bishop sent a runner over to our place to tell us to be ready to leave on the next train [departing from nearby Casas Grandes] that would take us to El Paso, Texas. We were to meet at 1:00 am at the store [or depot] where the train would take us on. We had to walk out of our home and leave everything we could not pack into two trunks—cows, horses, chickens, all our food and household things."[9] Vaneese Harris Woffinden remembered, "Each family was told to pack one trunk and make a roll of bedding in preparation to leave at a minute's notice." Just before leaving with a group of Saints on the train she also recalled, "Bishop Thurber blessed his congregation and prayed God's protection on them."[10]

Jesse M. Taylor remembered there were many revolutionists at the Casas Grandes depot who were riding on horses back and forth along the rail line. He also observed, "It was pretty ticklish the way everything was. We finally got loaded on the train and



Mormon colonists gathering for departure, courtesy Church History Library.





pulled out."[11] Annie O'Donnal (wife of Frank O'Donnal) recalled that when she traveled out of the mountains from Garcia to the Pearson train depot, she tried to "keep the children quiet." Later she recalled that they said, "Let's sing," and, as the nervous and frightened adults were bidding farewell to their homes, the children began singing.[12]

Charles E. McClellan declared, "Words cannot fully describe all that it meant to these people to abandon their homes and all the cherished accumulations bought so dearly with toil and sacrifice through a quarter of a century." To capture the emotion of this event, McClellan related the incident when his brother announced to their aged parents, "Mother, you and father have just thirty minutes in which to put into one small trunk the most valuable things you own. . . . The wagon will call for you in thirty minutes to take you to the station."[13]

Helaman Judd related that Church members in Chuichupa received word late one evening that the women and children were to be on the train the following day. "And so everybody was just as busy as could be all night long getting ready to go."[14] Camilla Eyring, seventeen years old at the time, recalled that it was necessary to leave "everything I ever owned." She further noted, "Our family was in a third-class car with long, hard benches . . . and baggage piled on top of one another. Buggies and wagons were left standing empty at the station. When passenger cars filled up, boxcars and even a few cattle cars were attached. We all suffered intensely [inside] the delayed train . . . in the stifling July heat."[15]

Sarah Jones Payne explained, "Suitcases, trunks and bedding were put in first and packed to a depth of four feet. The people found seats as best they could on top of these." She further noted that notwithstanding the difficult circumstances of their train travel, nine-year-old Earl Jones provided a touch of humor when he accidently "stepped into a five-gallon can of honey with a cloth tied over the top of it, and strung honey all over people, bedding and luggage."[16]

Robert Chestnut Beecroft remembered that, prior to the first rail departure, families were divided according to gender and age: "We put our women and children on the train and sent them to El Paso. All men over fifty years of age, and boys under sixteen years, had to go with the women. All boys over sixteen had to stay with the men. So my son Nello stayed with me, as he had just turned sixteen August 11."[17]

In addition to the trial of leaving adult male family members and many possessions behind, with the exception of "a roll of bedding, a trunk of clothing and a basket of food,"[18] great patience was also required due to the challenge of rail travel out of Mexico. Willard Whipple, who was a young teen at the time of the exodus, remembered that "the train traveled so slowly that some of the youngsters jumped off and ran along side."[19] The reprieve for men and for boys over sixteen was short-lived. Soon after the women and children were put safely on the trains, the men decided that they too must exit and within weeks they traveled by horseback to Hachita, New Mexico, where they took a train to meet their families in El Paso. Other colonists from the Mexican state of Sonora would migrate directly to Arizona and other locations.



Bishop Thurber of Dublan was elected "general," to organize and command the Saints in their exodus from Mexico.



Men loading the train for the women and children departing for El Paso, by Otis Aultman, from El Paso Public Library.

The departing Saints' afflictions would increase when most of them later realized they would not return to their beloved homes in the colonies. As Edward Christian Eyring explained, "At the time of leaving we had not the slightest idea we were making a permanent move. The families going out on the train took only a few necessary articles to last for a couple of weeks when we expected we would return." Yet most of the departing colonists never went back.[20]

Reception and Residence for the Weary Mormon Migrants at El Paso

During the blistering summer of 1912, El Paso, Texas—which lies near the northern border of the Mexican state of Chihuahua—played a pivotal role as a refuge for the Revolution-fleeing Saints.[21] On July 29, 1912 the front page of the *El Paso Morning Times* announced that five hundred American refugees had crossed the border into El Paso at midnight, with 2,000 more expected soon. Traveling on special trains of the Mexico North-Western Railway, they came in from Pearson and Casas Grandes.[22] In Salt Lake City, also on July 29, the front page of the *Deseret Evening News* blared "Mormons Flee From Mexico" and reported "dire threats" as the cause of their flight.[23] Two days later a somewhat more objective article in the same paper reported that the expulsion occurred "not because the colonists are Mormons," but "because they are Americans, and because they have valuable property. The blow, the insult is aimed at the United States and not at the Church . . . and the expulsion . . . is to be regarded as a measure of retaliation for the refusal of our government to recognize the insurgents"—that is, to render them aid.[24]

On August 1, the *El Paso Morning Times* reported that "More Refugees Have Arrived" and described the heart-rending sight of displaced Mormon women and children arriving at their destination: "The scene in the Union Station . . . as the train pulled in was a pitiful one. Children of all sizes and ages streamed from the coaches, tugging at the skirts of their mothers and looking in wild-eyed surprise at the evidences of the city about them."[25] The reporter went on to note, however, that a number of El Paso citizens quickly rallied to support the weary travelers by offering transportation: "As fast as the colonists gathered in the station lobby, the San Antonio street auto stand drove up to the side entrance of the building where the refugees were driven out to the lumber yard. . . . All the automobiles are furnished free of charge by the drivers."[26] The refugee Saints themselves confirmed the many willing hands and charitable hearts ready to receive them. Lucille R. Taylor recalled, "The El Paso people were very kind. They provided water and food and everything we needed because we had taken very little."[27] And William Morley Black later wrote, "I feel thankful to the good citizens of El Paso for the aid and sympathy they gave us."[28]

Still, El Paso was unprepared to accommodate the large number of refugees streaming into it. The abandoned lumber yard referenced by the reporter provided a camping







place, but little more. As Maude Cluff Farnsworth reported, "We had to hang blankets for a wall so we could go to bed. There were several babies born that [first] night without much help. We would go to the gate and see people looking through the cracks at us as if we were wild animals."[29] Other women had similarly negative memories. "People crowded in the depot and along the roads where our busses [sic] passed to look at us," Vaneese Harris Woffinden declared, "and when the gates of the lumber yard were closed curious onlookers peeked between the bars. I felt as if I were a circus animal on parade and later shut behind the bars of a cage."[30] Camilla Eyring recalled that "the kind people of El Paso met us at the depot and took us in automobiles . . . out to a big lumberyard, where they improvised shelter for the refugees." However, of necessity the improvised shelter had been hastily prepared and was insufficient accommodation for the many who needed it. Eyring continues: "They put us into a corral with dust a foot deep, flies swarming, noisy, stinking, and crowded with a mass of humanity. It was enough to make the stoutest heart sink. Those in charge tried to arrange a stall for each family, and we piled in for the night, hanging blankets in an attempt at a little privacy. During that night five babies were born in these rude shelters. We felt humiliated as newspaper photographers and reporters recorded our pitiful dependence and as the curious townspeople gawked and pointed at us, as they would animals in a zoo."[31]

Although many Mormon refugees believed they had become a freak-show attraction, and although the *Deseret Evening News* confirmed that "the refugee camps are the gathering place for many El Pasoans, many of them visiting the place out of idle curiosity," the *News* insisted that "by far the greater number" of local visitors to the camps wanted to "ascertain if they can in any way assist in alleviating the sufferings of the refugees"—and that "the people of El Paso have opened their hearts to assist the colonists."[32] Some El Pasoans provided meat and vegetables, enabling Mormon women in the camp to "cook huge pots of stew where each refugee might come and receive hot food."[33]

One refugee observed that, using "a campfire out in front of the building," two or three persons were assigned each day to "cook dinner for the whole group that were in the building"—and that a typical meal was potatoes boiled "in a six-gallon lard can." And while "it seemed so good to have hot food," there were always "news reporters and cameramen . . . on the job making the most of everything."[34] The media reports likely encouraged El Pasoans in their prompt and sincere relief efforts. Almost overnight, as the *Deseret Evening News* reported on July 30, "The city has put in water sewerage and lights and the Mormon Church is furnishing food to those unable to buy it. Many of the refugees are without clothing or utensils for cooking, but these are rapidly being provided and they are being made as comfortable as possible."[35]

Indeed, given the scanty lead time available to them, LDS Church leaders in Salt Lake City and elsewhere had done much to prepare for the impending refugee crisis. Anthony W. Ivins of the Quorum of the Twelve, who had been the first stake president in Mexico, was assigned to arrange provisions and temporary lodging for the refugees as well as rail transportation in and out of El Paso. On July 26, two days before the first Mormon refugees reached El Paso, an LDS Church relief committee was established in the city

Left and above: Mormon refugees from Mexico living in a lumber yard, courtesy Library of Congress.



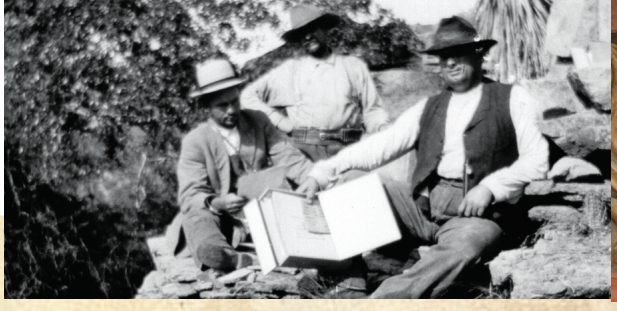
Photos by John Edward Wall, courtesy Church History Library.

with Henry Eyring Bowman as chairman. Other committee members included Guy C. Wilson, Orson Pratt Brown and Joseph E. Robinson—who was then serving as the president of the California mission.[36] On July 29, just after the first refugees were arriving in the city, Bowman explained their plight to El Paso businessmen. After hearing Bowman's report, Walter S. Clayton, president of El Paso's Chamber of Commerce, asked his fellows "to devise ways and means to care for the families of the American settlers . . . who were being driven from their homes"—and many quickly responded.[37] Mayor C. E. Kelly later remarked, "As the city's chief executive I did what I could. What I did as a citizen I refuse to permit you to mention. These people are El Paso's guests and it is our pleasure and our duty to take care of them."[38]

For the colonists, the weeks following their flight from Mexico were marked by deep and conflicting emotions. On the one hand, "their homes [were] looted, their fields and crops devastated, and their cattle stolen and killed"—and they were forced to flee to El Paso and other border cities where they were "huddled in quarters . . . with scanty provisions and only a few comforts." On the other, "El Pasoans and others active in the relief work" generously did "everything possible . . . for the refugees," reaching out to them and blessing their lives.[39] The US military station at Fort Bliss also provided provisions, shelter, and services for the displaced Mormons. Myrl Rowley Day, a young girl at the time of the exodus, recalled that army soldiers had built a shower for the refugees "out of green lumber . . . so the water could leak out." She further remembered that "the shower itself was a tin can with nail holes in it," and that because she and the other children "had always taken a bath in a washtub" and "had never seen a shower before," they "thought [the shower] was great."[40]

Perhaps the most welcome assistance came from Washington DC. William Morley Black spoke for all the refugees when he said, "I feel thankful to our government and to President William H. Taft for the prompt appropriation of the magnificent sum of one hundred thousand dollars to be used in giving aid to the American citizens who were expelled from Mexico."[41] These funds were used for food that was distributed at the abandoned lumber yard and for hundreds of tents that had been transported from St. Louis and that were distributed from nearby Fort Bliss.[42] As reported by the *Deseret Evening News* on August 2, additional help came from "western railroads" who had "granted a rate of one cent per mile to colonists who want to leave for places of refuge and safety in the United States." The *News* reported further that "two hundred women and children will leave tonight for the Gila valley" and that "many others have left, or are preparing to leave for Utah, Arizona and other points."[43] A significant number of families remained in El Paso for several months or years—and some remained there permanently, convinced they had found home.

In an open letter published in the *El Paso Morning Times,* "Colonists Express Their Thanks to Citizens," Elder Anthony Ivins and the four members of the LDS Church relief committee in El Paso were spokesmen for the refugees in expressing deep gratitude for the generous aid and support of El Pasoans and others in a time of great need: *"To the Times:* In our own behalf and in behalf of the many refugees from the colonies of Chihuahua, who are now in El Paso, permit us to express, through the column of your paper, our appreciation, and the deep gratitude we feel, for the spontaneous and universal expression of sympathy, and the ready assistance, which has been rendered in this hour of trial and distress. . . . May He who rewards all men according to their works do unto you and yours as you have done unto us."[44]



Hiding Juárez stake records.



Epilogue to the 1912 Exodus

Most Mormon refugees were in El Paso only a short time before leaving to find new homes. Many of these moved nearer relatives and friends in Utah, Idaho, California, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. A few returned to their homes in the Mexican colonies. But some chose to stay in El Paso—which, a century later, their descendants still call home. Today there are two LDS stakes in the El Paso region and more than 9,000 Latter-day Saints. On the other side of the border, more than one million Mexican citizens have converted to the Latter-day Saint faith, and there are now a dozen LDS temples in Mexico.

A century following the exodus, a joyful commemoration was held at El Paso. Hundreds of Latter-day Saints and local citizens came together to remember the compassionate acts rendered by El Pasoans when thousands of LDS women and children suddenly fled Mexico and crossed the US border to safety.[45] On July 28, 2012, exactly a century from the time that the Mormons left Mexico for El Paso, a



Junius Romney

Juárez stake president who presided over the exodus in 1912.

In his role as the young stake president of the Juárez Stake in Mexico, Junius Romney is the central figure in the last great Mormon exodus. It follows in the series of exoduses, which began in Kirtland, Ohio, and continued through Missouri and Nauvoo to the Great Basin. He, with many others, lost virtually all of their material possessions in that final exodus from Mexico in 1912.

Romney's life exemplifies the lives of pioneer Latter-day Saints who made the desert blossom as a rose. Born in 1878 in St. George, Utah, he moved with his family to Mexico in 1885 where they contributed to the founding of Colonia Juárez. This was one of nine Mormon colonies founded in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. He attended school in the Juárez Stake Academy, with some additional studying in Salt Lake City. Junius began his career as an educator, but later he became a successful businessman. He held several callings in the Church in the colonies before being called as president of the Juárez Stake when only 30 years of age. The last two years of his tenure as stake president were during the Mexican Revolution. As the religious leader of the colonists, he was also their de facto political leader. As such, he played a central role in the colonists' struggles during the Revolution, which eventually led to the members of the entire stake evacuating their homes in the summer of 1912.

After the exodus, Junius' family lived in El Paso, Texas, for several months, then moved to Los Angeles, California, before finally moving to Salt Lake City. He and his wife Gertrude raised a family in Salt Lake City of six children— three boys and three girls. Junius was known for his sense of humor and respected for his integrity. He was a successful businessman, and a generous provider for his immediate family, his extended family, and others who were trying to find their way after the exodus from Mexico. Junius died in 1971 at the age of 93.

Source: *Look Upstream* by Joseph B. Romney, a grandson.



series of commemorative events took place to capture this heartwarming story, and a year or more was spent in coordinating and cooperatively planning for the event. Although the centennial commemoration held in El Paso on July 28, 2012 has come and gone, thousands continue to enjoy the rippling effects of the exhibit at the El Paso Museum of History; the documentary, "Finding Refuge in El Paso"; and the warm memories of shared experiences and association.

1 This article combines two earlier articles by Fred E. Woods: "Finding Refuge in El Paso: The 1912 Mormon Exodus from Mexico," 14 Oct 2012 https://ldsmag.com/article-1-11596/, and "Finding Refuge in El Paso: Remembering a Centennial Commemoration" *Mormon Historical Studies* 13.1, 2 (Spring/Fall 2012): 190–7.

2 Blaine Carmon Hardy, "The Mormon Colonies of Northern Mexico: A History, 1885–1912" (PhD diss., Wayne State U., 1963), 71–2.

3 Hardy 37.

4 Hardy 73–4.

5 Joseph Barnard Romney, "'The Lord, God of Israel, Brought Us Out of Mexico!': Junius Romney and the 1912 Mormon Exodus," *Journal of Mormon History* (Fall 2010): 210–1.

6 John Jacob Walser, "Journal," 8 Apr 1912, in "My Life," comp. Bonnie Simon, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

7 "The Life of Willard Whipple" (privately published, Sunnyvale, CA: 1977), 13–4.

8 Journal of Hyrum Albert Cluff, submitted by Mrs. Sarah Matilda Cluff Lewis, daughter of Hyrum Albert Cluff, in Nelle Spilsbury Hatch and B. Carmon Hardy, eds., *Stalwarts South of the Border* (1985), 122.

9 Journal of Catherine Aurelia Carling Porter, wife of Edson Darius Porter, in Hatch and Hardy 535.

10 Vaneese Harris Woffinden, "The Mormons in Mexico," in *Treasures of Pioneer History,* ed. Kate B. Carter (1954), 3:248.

11 Interview of Jesse M. Taylor by Ivan Carbine, 10 Nov 1959, transcript, 16, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

12 Interview of Frank and Annie O'Donnal by Karl Young, 26 Dec 1962, transcript, 11, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

13 Charles E. McClellan, "The Exodus," in Carter 3:242.

14 Interview of Helaman Judd by Joseph B. Romney, 31 Aug 1971, transcript, 6, California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program.

15 Caroline Eyring Miner and Edward L. Kimball, *Camilla: A Biography of Camilla Eyring Kimball* (1980), 30.

16 Sarah Jones Payne, daughter of Timothy Jones, in Hatch and Hardy 376–377.

17 Nelle Spilsbury Hatch and B. Carmon Hardy, *Stalwarts South of the Border* (1985), 29.

18 Albert Ezrel Thurber, son of Albert Daniel Thurber, in Hatch and Hardy 705.

19 William Whipple, cited by Pat Henry, "El Paso: Sanctuary to Mormon refugees," *El Paso Times* (February 5, 1984), 1E.

20 Edward Christian Eyring in Hatch and Hardy 149–50. Thomas C. Romney noted, "Although the decision had been made to send the women and children to El Paso it was felt by most of us at least that their absence would be of short duration" (*The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* [1938], 183). The decision for most not to return to the colonies was probably influenced by President Joseph F. Smith's declaration in October 1912, "I could not advise our people to go back to Mexico under existing circumstances. Indeed, *I would advise them not to go back,* if I should advise at all" (quoted in Romney 216–7).

21 W. H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (1990), xvii.

22 "Red Flaggers drive Americans from their Mexican homes," *El Paso Morning Times* (29 Jul 1912): 1.

Above: photo by John Edward Wall, courtesy Church History Library.



Rowley family at an El Paso, Texas refugee camp, 1912, courtesy Church History Library.

23 "Mormons Flee From Mexico," *Deseret Evening News* (29 Jul 1912): 1.

24 "Protesting Against Outrages," *Deseret Evening News* (31 Jul 1912): 4.

25 "More Refugees have Arrived," *El Paso Morning Times* (1 Aug 1912): 1–2. W. H. Timmons, El Paso: A Borderlands History (2004), 193, noted that Union Depot was constructed in 1906 at a cost of $260,000.

26 "More Refugees have Arrived," *El Paso Morning Times* (1 Aug 1912): 2.

27 Interview of Lucille R. Taylor by Joseph B. Romney, 27 Nov 1970, transcript, 6, California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program.

28 William Morley Black, in Hatch and Hardy 49–50.

29 Maude Cluff Farnsworth, wife of Byron Nephi Farnsworth, in Hatch and Hardy 169.

30 See account by Vaneese Harris Woffinden, "The Mormons in Mexico," in *Treasures of Pioneer History,* comp. Kate B. Carter, vol.3 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers), 248.

31 Caroline Eyring Miner and Edward L. Kimball, *Camilla: A Biography of Camilla Eyring Kimball* (1980), 31–32.

32 "Refugees From Colonies In Mexico Being Given Every Possible Comfort," *Deseret Evening News* (August 1, 1912), 1.

33 Woffinden 248.

34 Walter Frederick Hurst, in Hatch and Hardy 307.

35 "Refugees Are Fleeing North," *Deseret Evening News* (30 Jul 1912): 1.

36 Notes from Relief Committee Minutes, 1912, first page, cited in Romney 251–2.

37 "Heart Rending Recital Given," *El Paso Morning Times* (30 Jul 1912): 1.

38 Ibid. As listed in the article, names of the men chosen for the El Paso relief committee were "James A. Dick, chairman; J. H. Nations, Thomas O'Keeffe, J. C. Wilmarth, H. S. Potter, George Flory, D. M. Payne, J. A. Smith, and W. S. Clayton."

39 "Refugees From Colonies In Mexico Being Given . . . ": 1.

40 Interview of Mryl Rowley Day by Christine Day Young, 19 Feb 1978, transcript, 18, Church History Library.

41 William Morley Black, in Hatch and Hardy 49–50. Pat Henry, "El Paso: Sanctuary to Mormon refugees," *El Paso Times* (5 Feb 1984): 1E, provides details contradicting Black: "Mormon headquarters in Salt Lake City took responsibility for the refugees. The United States appropriated $20,000 for their care (which the Mormon Church paid back)."

42 "Orozco Expected to Burn Juárez Before He Evacuates The Town," *Deseret Evening News* (3 Aug 1912): 1.

43 "Colonists Leaving Refugee Camps For Places of Safety Elsewhere," *Deseret Evening News* (2 Aug 1912): 1.

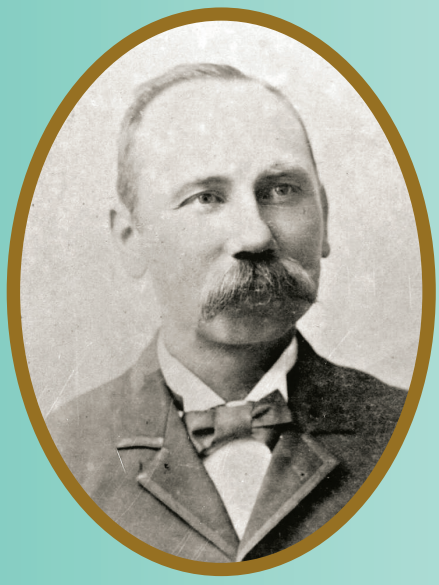
44 "Colonists Express Their Thanks to Citizens," *El Paso Morning Times* (2 Aug 1912): 1. It is probable that Elder Anthony W. Ivins penned the letter inasmuch as he presided over the committee and provided the first signature.

45 In his master's thesis, "The Exodus of the Mormon Colonists From Mexico, 1912" (U of Utah, 1967), Joseph B. Romney noted that, in 1912, there were about 4500 men, women, and children distributed among northern Mexico's nine colonies "as follows: Diaz, 750; Dublán, 1200; Juárez, 800, Pacheco, 275; Garcia, 275; Chuichupa, 275; San Jose, 200; Oaxaca, 64; and Morelos, 625." El Paso Mormon historian Michael R. Mullen has found evidence of at least one other settlement and perhaps more.

46 See n. 43.



El Paso Union Depot.



Reminiscences of Edward Christian Eyring

Edward Christian Eyring was born in St. George, Utah, May 27, 1868 to Henry and Mary Bommeli Eyring. While Edward was attending Brigham Young Academy, the family moved to Colonia Juárez in 1887. He joined the family in Mexico in 1889.

Excerpts from his life story written in 1939.

I was twenty-one years old in 1889, and the colonies had begun to be quite prosperous . . . It was splendid grass country, in which cattle and horses did well. While I helped my father [Henry, born 1832] in the store I found time to use the money I had saved while working in Colorado to buy up a few ponies and to trade for horses, which I enjoyed. I grew up with a natural love for horses and cattle and dearly loved to work with them.

In 1893, I bought a lot and made preparations for building a home near Colonia Juárez. On October 11, 1893, Caroline Romney and I were married in the Salt Lake Temple. I had proposed to her prior to this time, but it took me two years to convert her father to the idea. However, he finally approved and later paid me a very fine compliment, saying, he thought I was an ideal husband. Caroline and I commenced housekeeping under many obstacles. We had only a straw tick and very little furniture, but we were extremely happy. Our own home was being built and was soon ready for us. Before long we were quite comfortable, considering the times and country.

My first daughter, Camilla, was born December 7, 1894. We then learned what childbearing meant. I wondered many times that night if I would have a wife or child by morning, but, oh, the joy when we finally succeeded. I started on my mission [to Germany] the first of October 1897 going with my father and mother to Salt Lake City. When I went out to get in the carriage, I threw my tobacco away and have never tasted it since. If my mission did nothing more for me than that, that alone would be worth it. I have often wondered if I should ever have been able to discontinue its use, had I not gone on my mission. My wife was very brave, never making a complaint while I was away and was able to earn enough to keep me on my mission, but she worked very hard.

When I arrived home I found my wife better. She was just recovering from a very severe illness. Camilla was then a big girl of five years, and Mary, whom I had never seen, was two years old. I had not known that Mary had been born deaf. I think I never felt so badly in my life over anything. Nevertheless, I felt to praise the Lord that everything was as well as it was. I went back into the store to work, but decided it was too slow and that the cattle business might be better. Accordingly, I secured the job of tending the company pasture and commenced to buy stock in it. I succeeded in getting considerable stock and later, when we decided to separate, I got still more. I traded for the Palo Quemado Ranch of six thousand acres, which we used for our cattle in the summer, moving them back to the Tinaja for the winter.

When Father died in 1902, Andrew [a half-brother] and I continued to run our cattle together. I think the happiest time of my life was when we ran the dairy on the Tinaja, breaking broncos and caring for fat cattle on those green grassy hills. At that time the colonies were in their best days, everyone was prospering and there were good schools and good times for all. In 1903, I decided to enter the holy order of plural marriage, so with the help of my wife, I was able to woo my wife's sister, Emma, and after considerable persuasion, I married her in November of 1903. We then built her a home on the lot joining ours. My idea of plural marriage was strict equality, which I have tried to practice all these years.

In 1905 we moved across the river to be closer to the Juárez Stake Academy, so I bought a number of lots from James C. Peterson and one hundred





acres of pasture and land adjoining. There we built two very comfortable homes (brick) and were living very happily together—too much so—for the best good of mortals. I feel now that the twenty-five years of my life spent in Mexico were wonderful indeed. In July 1912, owing to Revolutionary conditions in Mexico, we were forced to move into the United States. At the time of leaving we had not the slightest idea we were making a permanent move. The families going out on the train took only a few necessary articles to last for a couple of weeks when we expected we would return. Most of the men remained in the country to guard the property, but conditions became so unbearable, that we knew sooner or later something terrible would happen. Accordingly, we decided to pack up, just leave everything, and move for the border. This we did, arriving at Hachita [New Mexico] and leaving our horses there.

From there we went to El Paso where we had sent our families. Even then we could not realize we were not going back. We remained in El Paso hoping for encouraging signs that we might return. We waited to see how it went with some of the brethren who went in to see how things were. When they were forced to come out again, our hopes wavered. Finally seeing the futility of going back there now, we decided to move to Arizona. We had lived in El Paso ten months. I moved to Safford, Arizona, and bought the Carder place, going in partnership with Miles A. Romney. This deal soon proved unsatisfactory so I sold out to Miles. By this time I had decided there was no possible chance of returning to Mexico, now or ever, to operate my prosperous business there, and that I had just as well abandon the idea. I tried the livery business as a substitute for a few months but soon saw there was no future in that. So I traded it for the Rogers farm in Pima [Arizona] and moved my family there. As part of the farm was still brush, it was uphill business getting settled.

"I feel now that the twenty-five years of my life spent in Mexico were wonderful indeed."

The dividends from the Tinaja property in Mexico proved our salvation. I had traded it off in 1916 for a store in Safford, Arizona which Andrew took part interest in and ran for me. But by trading it for land in Mexico and selling Andrew's property in Mexico to Miles Romney, we began to see daylight. Eddie [son] had done well with the Pima farm. We still have the farm, the comfortable duplex we built on it and are thankful for getting the mortgage gradually paid off while still keeping all the children in school.

In 1931 all of my mother's family met in Mesa and spent three months together doing temple work. Besides our good times together, we were able to do many names, most of them for our own progenitors. Had it not been for the pleadings and encouragement of my brother Henry, who is blind, this gathering would not have taken place, nor this history written. I will close this history by giving my testimony concerning the principle of plural marriage. This will no doubt be obnoxious to some who may read it. Even some of our descendants may wish it had been otherwise. I wish to impress this fact upon the minds of my children: that to discredit the principle of plural marriage is the same as discrediting any other principle of the Mormon doctrine as they all come from the same source. Joseph Smith the Prophet was commanded to establish this principle in the Church. I testify to you myself after twenty-eight years' experience in trying to live it that I know the principle is divine. Although it is at the present time unlawful both from the Church's view as well as from the standpoint of the state, I know it was established by God. Those who have lived it faithfully and well will receive a very enviable reward in the world to come. We are very thankful that the great government of the United States has granted amnesty to our people, and it is up to us to submit to the laws and to uphold the same.

Source: Nelle Spilsbury Hatch and B. Carmon Hardy, *Stalwarts South of the Border* (1985), 146–151.

ART BY EFREN GONZALEZ OF AJIJIC, JALISCO, MEXICO



BY SUSANNE LUNT PETERSON
Granddaughter of Sarah

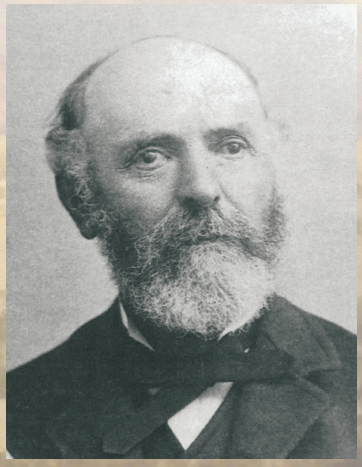
Sarah Ann Lunt

1858–1921[1]

Sarah Ann Lunt, the daughter of Edward and Harriet Wood Lunt, was born in Manti, Utah, on August 11, 1858. Sometime during her early childhood, her family moved to Nephi, Utah, where she grew up. She was the youngest of seven children, four boys and three girls, and at an early age she learned to card, spin, and weave the wool that was turned into clothes for herself and other family members.

Sarah's formal schooling was very limited, and she often said, "If my school days were all summed up, they would not exceed three weeks." In spite of this, she learned to read and did all her own letter-writing. Her two older brothers were stockmen, and, as a teenager, she spent much time cooking for them on their ranch. She was unusual in that she knew no fear of man or beast. At one time while she was on the ranch an angry steer attempted to gore her, and she felled him with a stone.

Henry Lunt[2], one of the original settlers of Cedar City, made regular trips to and from Salt Lake City, often calling on Sarah's father Edward in Nephi. In early April 1877, on his return from general conference, Henry stopped in Nephi for a visit. While there, his team turned short and broke the wagon tongue. Getting it repaired delayed his journey for hours, making it possible for fifty-two-year-old Henry to meet nineteen-year-old Sarah and for them to become acquainted with one another. The next time Henry passed that way—in October 1877—he asked Sarah to marry him, and she agreed, returning to southern Utah with him. They were married January 16, 1878, in the St. George Temple.



Henry Lunt

Following their marriage Sarah took charge of the family's hotel at Cedar City where they lived. Henry's first two wives, Mary Ann and Ellen, had previously taken care of the work, but were now at an age where they



ART BY JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO GÓMEZ

could no longer easily do it. Ellen also ran the family's telegraph office and was one of the original telegraph operators in the Utah Territory. Sarah found the hotel work engaging and satisfying, and from the beginning she was close to Henry's other wives, especially Ellen.

Things went well for Sarah and her new extended family until the raids on polygamy began in the early 1880s. To help Henry avoid prison, Church leaders called him on a two-year mission to England, and he took Ellen with him. Following his return home, things were no better, so Apostle Erastus Snow told Sarah, "It is your job to take your husband and go to Old Mexico where you can acquire land as a place of refuge. Pres. Porfirio Diaz is willing to allow us to live our religion."

In response Sarah said, "Brother Snow, do you know what you are asking of me? This hotel is the only means of support to the entire family. My husband is nearly blind, and I am the only one in the family who is able to run it. We have no means, and my oldest son is only eight years old." He said, "Sister Lunt, I feel it is the will of God that you should go, and the Lord will open the way if you will but obey."

Sarah prayed and fasted and thought it over until Apostle Snow came again. She was strong willed and did not act on anything until she knew from God that it was right. She and Henry left Cedar City late in the evening of November 16, 1887. There were no farewells; only the most trusted friends knew that they were leaving. Their party was small, consisting only of Henry, Sarah, and their four sons—Edgerton, Broughton, Parley, and Edward. The family took the southern route by way of "Dixie"—the area surrounding St. George.

Beyond Toquerville and Virgin City the family found lodging at North Creek in a two-room log house which had been used by campers as a kind of way-station. During their stay, Sarah discovered that all her sons had lice. Broughton later wrote, "I well remember the days of scrubbing and cleaning until the pests were exterminated. Then came the measles. The remedy was sheep-berry tea—which did all that any highly advertised patent medicine could do. It cured the measles."[3]

When the weather permitted, the family moved on, arriving in February 1888 at Moccasin Springs, Arizona, where they stayed at a stock ranch operated by Christopher Heaton. Sarah's fifth son, Heaton, was born there. When he was three weeks old the family journeyed on by way of Kanab over the Buckskin Mountains to House Rock. On their way, they were joined by Henry and Ann Gower Lunt's seventeen-year-old son, Oscar. Shortly after, while the family's wagon was slowly traveling down one of many





steep descents, Sarah was thrown from the wagon with the baby. In trying to protect the baby in the fall, Sarah hurt her ankle quite badly. Henry had her sit on a stone and then administered to her. She recovered sufficiently to continue the journey although she remained lame for months.

Sarah had a natural horror of crossing the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry, likely remembering the 1876 drowning there of Lorenzo W. Roundy. The family's route meant they had to cross at the upper ferry—and that they must first go over Lee's Backbone, a very dangerous and steep mountain. Broughton later wrote: "I will never forget as we started down the ridge with steep canyons on both the north and the south sides, Oscar fell from the wagon, lodging on the tugs of the team on his back. The brake came off and the horses were unable to control the wagon. No matter which way it went it meant certain destruction. Luckily, Oscar regained control and all was well."[4]

Although several men had to hold the wagon from tipping into the water as the family was ferried across the Colorado, the Lunts crossed safely and began their trek down the Mormon Corridor in eastern Arizona, arriving in the Snowflake-Pinedale area in late spring 1888. Here, they were joined by Ellen, Ann, and Ann's family, although Ann would return temporarily to Cedar City with the family's buggy, rejoining the others later in Mexico. The Lunts would remain in Pinedale until the summer of 1889, working for fellow Mormons in the area and preparing for the remainder of their journey.

In late autumn 1889, the family finally reached Deming, New Mexico, the last US town before their crossing into Mexico. There they stocked up on a few things, as far as their meager means allowed, including two cast-iron cook stoves, two rockers, and a half dozen chairs.

Upon arriving in Colonia Díaz in December, the family had to leave their only team of horses. The two geldings were old, and nothing but mares could go on from there duty-free. From Juárez to Pacheco was the hardest end of the journey, as the notorious San Diego Canyon had to be scaled. The Lunts managed to acquire the assistance of lumber haulers, arriving at the town site of Pacheco on January 21, 1890, just as the sun was setting in the west.[5]

Other colonists soon arrived: the Scotts, Farnsworths,

LEE'S FERRY ART BY GLEN HOPKINSON

Rowleys, Cooleys, Blacks, Heatons, Porters, Carrolls, and many others. A log school and church were quickly erected. A ditch from Water Canyon was eventually dug, but in the meantime all water was either carried or hauled in barrels from the streams a mile away. Although the Lunts were members of the Pacheco Ward, they lived on a ranch outside the town and lower in Corrales Valley where their stock could graze.

The year 1891 was marked by severe drought, and food became very scarce. Fall also came early, and the corn did not mature. The family's only good team of mares had to be sold to make ends meet, and all their suckling colts had been killed by mountain lions before the first season was over. During this time most Saints in the colonies were destitute. In the Pacheco area, the Lunts were the only ones who had corn.

The year 1892 was even more desperate than the previous year, and flour was not to be bought. The Lunts' cattle were dying of starvation, but the family saved enough corn to dry it and turn it into meal. People would come to Henry and say, "Brother Lunt, have you any more meal you could lend me? My family hasn't a dust of breadstuff in the house." His reply would be, "Ah, dear brother, you will have to see Sarah." Sarah's sons remembered well their mother bearing testimony that she had always shared with those in need, dividing her store of meal "down to the last mixing" and trusting that the Lord would somehow open the way for her to feed her own. Just after the last dust was divided, Albert Farnsworth came in to town from working on the "Mañana Railroad" with two four-horse wagons of flour. By that evening, Sarah had 1,000 pounds of flour in her house that her neighbors had brought to her in payment for the cornmeal she had shared with them.

In 1899 the Lunts' home in Corrales burned down. Because Henry and Ellen were now old and Henry had been nearly blind for several years, Sarah wanted to build a

Grade school in Pacheco, Mexico, circa 1908.





Rey L. Pratt

brick house large enough for them and her own family to live in. Perhaps remembering with fondness her years in Cedar City, she also wanted the home to have a few spare rooms for passers-by, as it seemed there were always travelers looking for accommodations. The family built a two-story home with nine large rooms—and had it finished and paid for in eighteen months. Sadly, Henry passed away in January 1902, two months before the home was completed, and Ellen died in May 1903, having been able to enjoy the new home for only a brief time.[6]

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the Noroeste rail line was completed as far south as Terrazas, and the rail company advertised their road as the opening up of one of the best hunting grounds in America—the Sierra Madre Mountains—to both small- and large-game hunters. The Lunt home was on the route where hunters were outfitted after quitting the wagon road and entering the mountains. And it was the only place in the entire area where people could get hotel accommodations.

At the time of the exodus from the Mormon colonies in 1912 Sarah's son Broughton was in the Mexican town of Toluca as a full-time LDS missionary. Rey L. Pratt was president of the Mexican Mission, and most of his twenty-two missionaries were from the colonies and were dependent on their families. Hearing that the colonists had been removed to El Paso, Texas, President Pratt immediately went there to see what could be done. Sarah met him and gave him $50 to give to Broughton, saying, "I want him to stay as long as he is needed. We will get along all right."

In the summer of 1913, although the Revolution continued, Sarah thought it her duty to return to Mexico and put Clarence and Owen in the Juárez Stake Academy. She was made matron of the Ivins Home which had become part of the school and where many student boarders lived.

In 1919, she again returned to Colonia Pacheco. To go back to the devastated home in Corrales where she had spent so many struggling but happy years was a trial that few women could endure. Her once beautiful home was a pile of rubble with only parts of the walls standing. Fences were gone that once enclosed fertile areas. There was no stock on the range to be looked after or bring in profit, no bawling of calves. All was silent except for the chatter of local inhabitants who gathered to greet her. A few homes of her friends had escaped the forest fires that had swept the town. But the once beautiful two-story church to which she had contributed so much was a skeleton with a leaky roof and glassless windows.

Undaunted, she moved into the adobe home of her son Heaton, which had not been destroyed. President Anthony W. Ivins visited the town in 1920 and made her youngest son, Clarence, bishop of the Pacheco Ward with Harlo Johnson as his first counselor and William Jarvis as his second. Sarah re-fenced the fields, obtained more cows, and

Sarah Lunt's home in Corrales, two miles south of Pacheco.



BACKGROUND ART BY JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO GÓMEZ

resumed making cheese. She was happy again. To once more be back where her husband and Ellen were buried was very important to her.

During the late summer of 1921 her health began failing, and four of her sons visited her, trying to persuade her to let them move her to Arizona where they now lived. She declined, saying, "I want to stay right here. If it is the Lord's will that I should live, He can make me well here, and if my time to die has come, I want to die and be buried here." She told her sons that she had had a dream. In it, she entered a deep canyon and as she traveled through it, the walls became higher and steeper until she reached a point where it looked as though she could go no farther. Just as she was about to give up, the canyon walls suddenly opened into a beautiful valley. She said, "I don't know whether it means I am going to get well or pass to the other side."

On Christmas Eve 1921 family members gathered at her bedside and watched over her for the next three days. During the evening of December 27 she died with her husband Henry's name on her lips, gazing heavenward. Throughout the long years of the Revolution, most currency had lost its value, but Sarah had knowingly and carefully laid away forty silver dollars in a baking powder can, hidden in her flour bin, to pay her burial expenses.

1 This account of Sarah's life is based on and excerpted from the history written by Sarah's second son, Broughton Lunt. Available online at the *Las Colonias—The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* website.

2 Despite the same surname, the families of Henry Lunt and Sarah Lunt were apparently not related.

3 Broughton's own remembered experience as recorded in the history of his mother. The herb he refers to is *Viburnum lentago,* commonly known as nannyberry, sheepberry, or sweet viburnum.

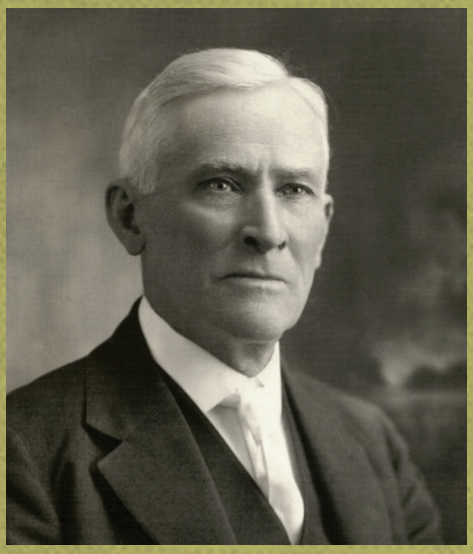
4 Broughton's own remembered experience.

5 The Pacheco townsite was situated in the upper Corrales Valley of the Sierra Madres mountains—at an elevation of 7000 feet.

6 "Lunt Home in Mexico," *WikiTree,* photo with notation and caption.

Anthony W. Ivins and the LDS colonies in Mexico

by Thomas G. Alexander



Anthony W. Ivins, who served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve from 1907 until 1934, was intimately connected with the LDS colonies in Mexico from their beginning. Accompanied by a party of experienced settlers in 1875, Ivins explored the Arizona-Mexican border region for possible colonization sites. Church leaders then sent him into Mexico from October 1877 to June 1878 to explore for colonization opportunities. His party noted several valleys that offered good prospects and reported those to church leaders. From 1882 to 1884 Ivins served as acting president of the Mexican Mission. In 1885 LDS settlement began in northern Mexico.

In 1895, the First Presidency called Ivins as president of the Mexican Mission. He constructed a home for his family at Colonia Juárez and organized the Juárez Stake and served as its first president. Working with others, Ivins negotiated land purchases and supervised surveys for settlement and irrigation. He met with the Mexican government's colonization minister, and with President Porfirio Diaz on behalf of the colonists. He worked with others to establish rules for harvesting timber and distributing irrigation water and contended

with people who made claims to land that he had purchased for the colony.

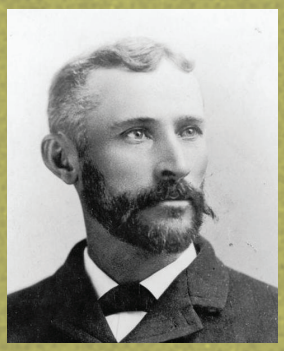
As stake president Ivins also conducted normal stake business. This included resolving disputes between members, visiting and speaking in wards and branches, organizing leadership, conducting stake conferences, and founding the Juárez Academy. He also regularly returned to Salt Lake City for general conferences.

Pres. Ivins also became involved in the vestiges of plural marriage. In 1890 President Wilford Woodruff announced his intention to end plural marriage and to encourage others to do the same. However some church leaders continued to approve new plural marriages between 1890 and 1904. LDS members who visited Mexico during those years sometimes carried a letter from President George Q. Cannon or another church leader to Pres. Ivins. Though a monogamist himself, Ivins performed plural marriages for these people as instructed by these letters. In 1904, President Joseph F. Smith ruled that the church would try Latter-day Saints for their church membership if they entered into new plural marriages, substantially ending this practice.

In 1907, Pres. Smith called Ivins to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, but his connection with Mexico did not end. Following the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, the First Presidency sent Ivins to advise the colonists. Ivins strongly supported Porfirio Diaz, the long-time president of Mexico, but Diaz quickly lost power and resigned on May 25, 1911. Despite Diaz's resignation the revolution did not end, and violence in the areas around the Mormon colonies increased. The First Presidency authorized Elder Ivins to use necessary funds to evacuate the Mormons from Mexico if it became necessary. In July 1912, in part with funds supplied by Ivins, the colonists from Dublan and Juárez began to flee for El Paso, Texas under the leadership of Stake President Junius Romney. By August 11 Saints from other colonies had joined in the flight. On October 10, 1912, the First Presidency released all stake and ward officers and told the colonists they could choose to return to Mexico or remain in the United States. Members did both.

Sources: Anthony W. Ivins, *Cowboy Apostle: The Diaries of Anthony W. Ivins,* ed. Elizabeth Oberdick Anderson (2013) and Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (2012), 212–216.



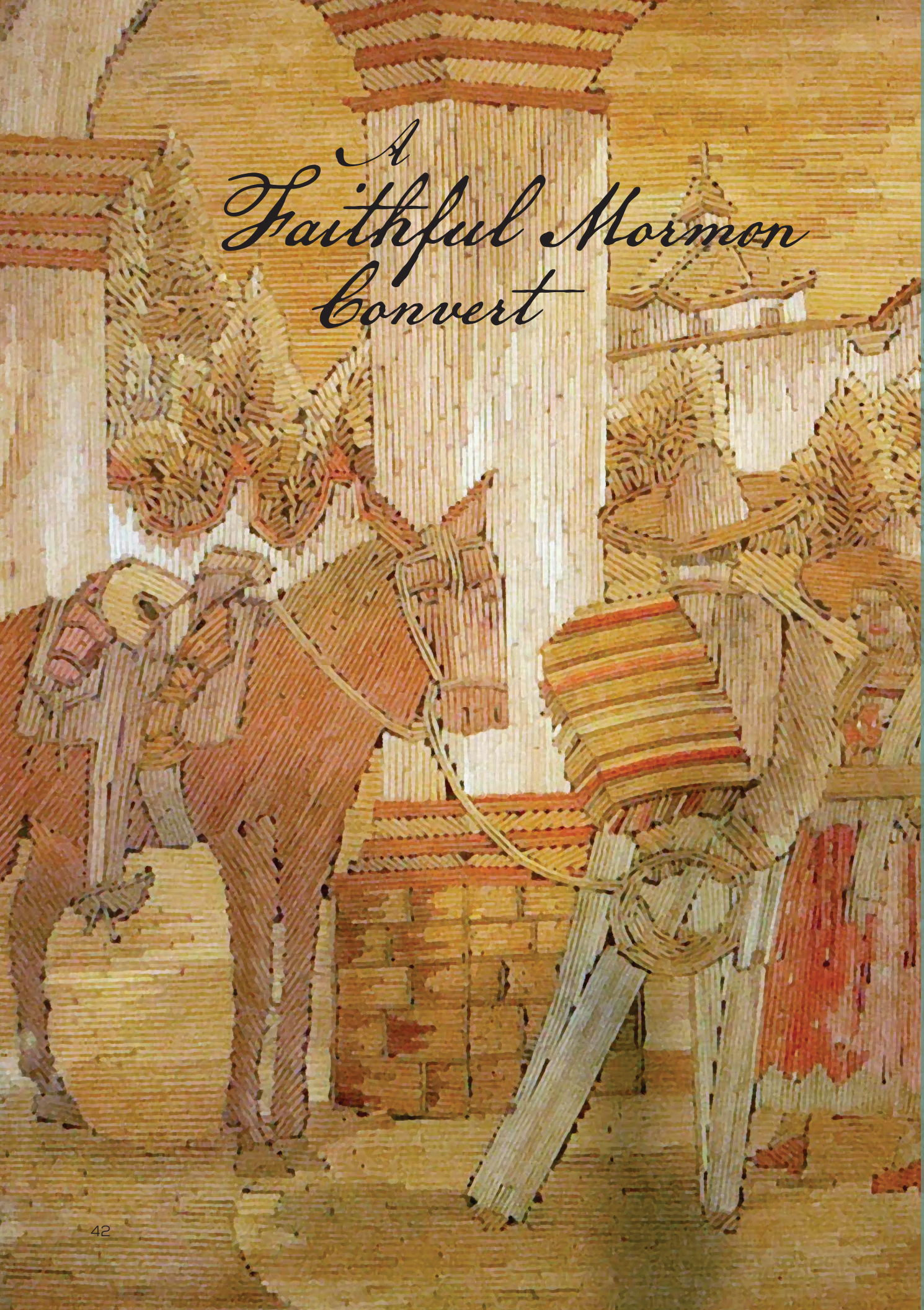


Left: Anthony W. Ivins at the time of his marriage to Elizabeth Snow in 1878. Right: Ivins, age 35 (ca. 1887).



Above: Ivins, second from the right, front row, entertaining Governor Miguel Ahumada (center, front) at home in Colonia Juárez (ca. 1900). Below: Ivins and his horse, Blanco, ca. 1920. Images courtesy Utah State Historical Society.





A Faithful Mormon Convert

BY SUSAN EASTON BLACK

Emeritus Professor of Church History & Doctrine, Brigham Young University

Toribio Ontiveros



For the great majority of Mexicans residing in Chihuahua, the last two decades of the nineteenth century were harsh. President Porfirio Díaz,[1] a former Mexican general, had consolidated his power and ruled his countrymen with an iron fist. Yet to foreign investors and potential US colonists, Díaz graciously extended a welcome mat. There was no denying that the ruler wanted to industrialize Mexico and, given its shared border with the United States, northern Chihuahua seemed the natural gateway to the economic growth Diaz sought. The Mexican clan of Terrazas-Creel[2] agreed with the diplomacy of Díaz and, exercising tight political and social control over Casas Grandes, expressed a willingness to embrace foreign colonists there.

The story of European American Mormons who helped colonize the Casas Grandes area is often told. In pioneering such communities as Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán, they demonstrated remarkable economic success and spiritual commitment. Yet retellings of their heroic narrative sometimes overshadow the equally compelling story of their Mexican converts. One such convert was Toribio Ontiveros, a man who is little-known except to his extended posterity.

Toribio was born on April 16, 1882, to Pascual Ontiveros and Leonides Vigueria in a "humble adobe house" in Casas Grandes.[3] When Toribio was three years old, Mormon colonists began setting up camp in nearby Colonia Juárez. However, Toribio's childhood would differ markedly from those of the young Mormon boys growing up in Colonia Juárez, who had the advantage of schooling and a semblance of economic security. Toribio wrote, "My

LEFT: MEXICAN VINTAGE STRAW-ART (POPOTE ART OR POPOTILLO) THAT PREDATES THE ARRIVAL IN MEXICO OF THE SPANISH. THE SCENE IS CREATED USING THOUSANDS OF MINUTE PIECES OF DYED STRAW (POPOTE, IN SPANISH). OVAL WOODCUT, *CORN HARVEST* BY ALFREDO ZALCE.

childhood was heartbreaking, as I never had the opportunity to go to school. My father was very poor and at a tender age I dedicated myself to help in the daily chores as much as my capacity and strength allowed me. The *casiquismo* [political leaders who exercised control over the Casas Grandes region] were very powerful in those days; and, for no reason at all, they would take everything the poor farmers produced. . . . I saw my poor father . . . with tears in his eyes plead with them to leave him a morsel of corn to feed his family [but he] was unable to persuade them."[4]

Toribio concluded, "Even though I was very young, this left a deep scar in my heart."[5] Toribio vowed that when he was old enough to make a difference, he would change society to favor the poor and the landless.

But no childhood experience left a deeper, more lasting impression than the youthful dream Toribio had at age fourteen. In the dream, an elderly man and woman appeared to him in his room. The man called Toribio by name and told him of a book that contained the history of the elderly couple's family. The man asked Toribio to buy the book, and in the dream he gave Toribio a coin about the size of a *tostón*, a half-peso. The couple then bade him good night and were just about to leave his room when they stopped at the doorway and exchanged a few words. Toribio did not hear their exchange. When it ended, the elderly man returned to Toribio's bedside and asked for the coin he had given him. Toribio returned the coin. The elderly man handed Toribio a larger coin about the size of a peso. The couple then departed and the dream ended.[6]

Toribio shared the dream with his mother, Leonides, a devout Catholic. She concluded that the elderly couple must have been Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary. As for the book Toribio was to buy, it was a book about the family's patron saint. Believing his mother's interpretation of the dream, Toribio bought the book his mother suggested, read it, and was disappointed. But he didn't forget his dream.



In 1897, at age fifteen, Toribio left Casas Grandes to work in the San Pedro Corralitos mines, about sixty miles from his home. It was difficult for him to leave his family, but equally difficult to leave Eustaquia Acosta, the girl across the street. Although they had been friends since childhood, their relationship had recently become more interesting. Toribio later claimed that Eustaquia was the only girlfriend he ever had. He returned to Casas Grandes once a month to see her. On these occasions, he and his friends arranged dances. At a dance held at the Juan Molina residence



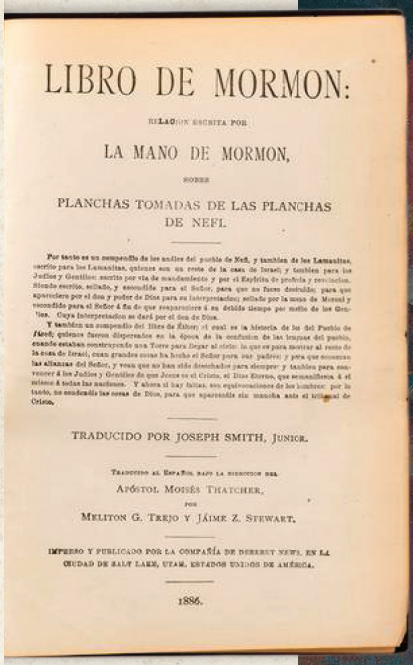
PHOTO BY HUGO BREHME

in 1900, Toribio asked his childhood sweetheart to marry him, and she accepted. On September 15, 1902, twenty-year-old Toribio and nineteen-year-old Eustaquia were married in the Casas Grandes Catholic Church by Father Agustin Terrazas.[7]

Toribio did not return to the San Pedro Coralitos mines after his marriage. He worked for his father in Casas Grandes and settled into family life as children graced his home. However, all was not peaceful for him. Toribio's discontent and that of hundreds of others in Casas Grandes centered on the unpopular regime of Porfirio Díaz. Labor strikes, peasant deaths, and an uprising led to the fall of economic markets and instability in the Casas Grandes region. Wanting to keep his family safe and hoping for a brighter economic future, Toribio looked to the Mormon colonies where industrious Latter-day Saints had established a grist mill, tannery, canning factory, and a cooperative store. To say that money flowed in the streets of the Mormon colonies was an exaggeration, but the Mormon economic and social influence was enough to entice Toribio and his family to leave Casas Grandes and relocate in the center of Mexican Mormonism.

In 1907 Toribio was employed in the Mormon-owned Juárez Tanning and Manufacturing Company where he became acquainted with Anson Porter. On a lunch break Porter asked Toribio if he would be interested in reading the Book of Mormon. Toribio asked the price of the book and was told that until recently the Book of Mormon had sold for fifty centavos, but now the price was a peso. Anson's words startled Toribio, for they were reminiscent of his youthful dream. Toribio paid the peso, accepted the book, and went home to read.

In the introduction to the First Book of Nephi, Toribio read, "An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah, and their four sons." At that moment and for the remainder of his life, Toribio was certain it was Lehi and Sariah who had appeared to him years before in his dream. On May 12, 1907, Toribio and Eustaquia were baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Within four months, Toribio was ordained a teacher and then a priest by Elder Ammon M. Tenney. Soon he was serving a five-week mission in the neighboring towns of Galeana, Valle de San Buenaventura, Las Cruces, Namiquipa, La Providencia, Las Mansanas, Tejalocachic, Santo Tomás, and Guerrero. During his absence, Anson Porter provided financially for Eustaquia and her children.


LIBRO DE MORMON:

RELACION ESCRITA POR

LA MANO DE MORMON,

SOBRE

PLANCHAS TOMADAS DE LAS PLANCHAS DE NEFI.

TRADUCIDO POR JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR.

TRADUCIDO AL ESPAÑOL BAJO LA DIRECCION DEL APÓSTOL MOISÉS THATCHER, POR MELITON G. TREJO Y JAIME Z. STEWART.

IMPRESO Y PUBLICADO POR LA COMPAÑÍA DE DESERET NEWS, EN LA CIUDAD DE SALT LAKE, UTAH, ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA.

1886.

Toribio felt like a new man. His happiness would have been unbridled if not for his concerns over the Porfirio Díaz regime. Toribio joined a growing anti-Díaz political movement. He aligned himself with the socialist party, o[8] On the night of June 24, 1908, Toribio was apprehended by order of the Casas Grandes Jefe Político [political boss] and charged with being an associate and supporter of Guerrero. He was imprisoned in the penitentiary at Chihuahua City for six months before being transported to the San Juan de Ulúa prison at Veracruz.[9] Toribio wrote, "On the 14th of January 1909 at 11 PM I was remitted to 'San Juan de Ulua' where I was imprisoned for another 18 months."[10] During those months, he slept on a stone slab, had a daily fare of a cup of beans and a cup of coffee, and contracted malaria. In mid-1910 he was released from prison.

Toribio returned to his family weak and exhausted, a mere shadow of the man he had been. Nevertheless, he immediately resumed supporting his



family and was hired as a night watchman at the Union Mercantile. Because he lacked sufficient capital to buy a house or land, lodgings were provided by his employer Melchor Bowman. Although Toribio appreciated Bowman's generosity, he saw in Bowman's gesture an undercurrent of racism that did not suit him. He believed the reason he could not purchase a house or land had more to do with the prejudicial sentiment of others than with his own lack of capital. Perhaps Toribio was correct in his assessment, given the contrasting perceptions of contemporary whites and Mexicans as recorded by colonist Thomas Cottam Romney: "Genetically, the two peoples differed. The Mexicans were predominantly Latin, and by nature temperamental and given to intense emotionalism, inclined to be more theoretical than practical.

"The great rank and file of natives had lived a life of serfdom and even now were subject in the main to the dictates of the overlords. Under these conditions they were to experience little else in life than grinding toil and hard-earned penury. The colonists . . . were not strangers to the better things of life. Their methods of farming, of business, and of travel were on a higher plain than those of their neighbors.

"Socially, the colonists were exclusive and seclusive [sic], having few if any contacts with their neighbors. Such was an avowed policy of the Church in the establishment of colonies in Mexico from the beginning and this policy was ever kept in mind."[11]

Toribio didn't have long to consider the racism of fellow Mormons, for the Mexican Revolution was at his doorstep. It was the wealth in the Mormon colonies that attracted the revolutionaries, and more than one colonist was the target of harassment, thievery, and extortion. Toribio was caught between his commitment to social justice and his religious convictions. In an open letter to stake members dated July 28, 1912, President Junius Romney of the Colonia Juárez Stake advised all Mormon colonists to flee from northern Mexico to the United States. Toribio watched as colonists quickly packed a few belongings and fled to the US border.

Most who fled viewed their escape as a temporary absence. Colonist Daniel Skousen saw himself returning to Dublán as soon as the political crisis ended. Knowing that Toribio was staying in Mexico, Skousen entrusted him with the care of his horses, cows, and buildings until his return. What Skousen did not know was that Toribio was intent on joining "the reserve corps that [he] might fight against the *latifundista*"[12]—landed estate owners who kept their laborers in a state of virtual servitude. Toribio would later record, "In spite of the danger that I was in, I prevailed, and nothing happened to me."[13]



Daniel Skousen

In 1916 Francisco "Pancho" Villa,[14] a revolutionary general and one of the most prominent figures of the Mexican Revolution, raided Columbus, New Mexico, to obtain weapons. The partially successful raid was costly for Villa's army and proved a precursor to his declining military and political influence. But for Toribio there was an upside, for he wrote, "The Revolution was victorious in conquering the *latifundio* resulting in the [return] of land we so vehemently desired falling in our hands."[15] Toribio had encounters with the Villistas and Federales while caretaker of the Skousen Ranch,



and he was whipped on at least one occasion when he refused to give revolutionaries the food they demanded, but Toribio and his family were never forced to leave the ranch or to join their Mormon contemporaries in the United States.

When the United States entered the Great War in Europe in 1917, Toribio realized that labor was needed in the US to replace the men who had left to fight. Toribio applied for and received a passport to travel and work in the United States. Voluntarily traveling by train to El Paso, Texas, he and his family were met by kindly border guards—and were relieved to not be shaved or bathed like other Mexican families were before entering the US.

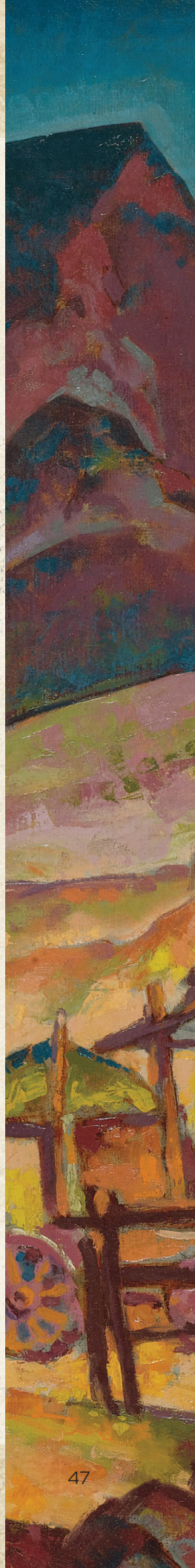
Over the next several months, the family traveled northwest through southern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona, then north through Utah. They stayed several days in Salt Lake City and were sealed together in the Salt Lake Temple on April 4, 1918. They then continued their journey north to Idaho where they found work in the sugar beet fields.

Toribio soon recognized that no matter how hard he and his family worked, their economic circumstances were worse than they had been in the Mormon colonies. Toribio was initially determined to make a success of the family's difficult move and to remain in his adopted country. Then he learned of a flirtatious incident between his fifteen-year-old son José and a young American woman who made a suggestive comment to him.[16] Toribio found such conversation indecorous, and he was committed to preserving the faith and goodness of each of his children. Within days he had packed up his family and belongings and was on his way back to his own home in the Mormon colonies.

After his return from Idaho, Toribio continued his efforts to obtain the Casas Grandes *ejido*, or common land, for the *campesinos*, or local people. The constitution enacted after the Revolution required that land from the *latifundistas* be sold to local citizens who requested a parcel of land for their own, but gaining clear title to the land proved difficult. The Corralitos Land and Cattle Company claimed title to the same land Toribio was requesting. With the provisional deed placed under his shirt, Toribio journeyed to Mexico City to present his claim to the authorities. He received the legal title, but the land company continued to pressure him to relinquish it. Toribio persistently refused, even though his actions placed him in some danger.

His religion was always his first priority. In 1928 he left his farm to serve a proselyting mission in El Paso. He viewed the mission as an opportunity to fulfill a patriarchal blessing promise: "For He requires a great work from your hands in helping preach the gospel."[17]

Toribio's later years continued to be filled with poverty and hardship. But Toribio found great joy in his family, in hard work, and in serving the Lord humbly and willingly. He never varied in his con-





victions regarding social justice or, more crucially, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Toribio passed away on June 25, 1964, the town of Dublán paused to remember and express gratitude for the life of a man they regarded as heroic. Today generations of his posterity revere him as a pioneering Mormon convert and honor his exemplary endurance and faith.

1 José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz Mori served seven terms as President of Mexico, a total of three and a half decades from 1876 to 1880 and from 1884 to 1911.

2 Don Luis Terrazas (1829–1923) was the founder of the Terrazas-Creel clan. He served various terms as Governor of Chihuahua between 1860 and 1904. At one time, his ranches totaled more than seven million acres (Mark Wassermann, *Persistent Oligarchs Elites and Politics in Chihuahua, Mexico* [1993]).

3 Letter of Toribio Ontiveros to his daughter Virginia, 30 May 1960, Colonia Dublán. In author's possession.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Norberto Flores, "Toribio Ontiveros" (n.d.); Toribio Ontiveros, "Brief Life History written by Toribio Ontiveros"; Richard Estrada and Oscar J. Martinez, "Interview with Moroni Flores," U of Texas at El Paso Institute of Oral History, Tape 190, Transcript 190, p. 3.

7 The requisite civil marriage was performed by Municipal President Ramon Morales.

8 Práxedis Gilberto Guerrero Hurtado (1882–1910) was a Mexican anarchist, journalist, and fighter—and a leader of one of the primary factions of the Mexican Revolution. See Alan Knight, "Mexican Revolution: Interpretations" in *Encyclopedia of Mexico* (1997), 2:873.

9 San Juan de Ulúa, also known as Castle of San Juan de Ulúa, is a large complex of fortresses and prisons located on an island overlooking Veracruz. See Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain* (1963).

10 Letter of Toribio Ontiveros, op. cit.

11 Thomas Cottam Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (1938), 97.

12 Letter of Toribio Ontiveros, op. cit.

13 Ibid.

14 Francisco "Pancho" Villa (June 5, 1878–July 20, 1923) was murdered at Parral, Mexico, For more information on "Pancho" Villa, see John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico* (1969).

15 Letter of Toribio Ontiveros, op. cit.

16 Norberto Flores, "Toribio Ontiveros" (n.d.).

17 Patriarchal Blessing, 5 Nov 1907, signed Carlos Pulsiphierel. Church History Library.

ART BY WILLIAM PENHALLOW HENDERSON



A Source of Church Leadership
THE MEXICAN COLONIES

BY KENT V. LOTT

For 130 years, Saints in the Mexican colonies have honored their divinely inspired commission to help establish The Church of Jesus Christ in Mexico and to send missionaries throughout Mexico and into the larger world. Over the decades, hundreds of faithful missionaries have emerged from the colonies, as have many mission and temple presidents and visitor center directors, together with prominent General Authorities of the Church.

Two former members of the Colonia Juárez Stake have served in the First Presidency of the Church, Anthony A. Ivins and Marion G. Romney. Both President Ivins and President Romney were members of the Quorum of the Twelve; President Romney also served as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve.

The Colonia Juárez Stake has "seemingly doubled as a mission president factory."[1] Elder Eran A. Call, a former Seventy who once served as a mission president, claimed that, by 2001, the tiny colonies had yielded at least 118 mission presidents; by 2017, that number had increased to more than 130.[2] When sons and grandsons of colony residents are added in, these numbers increase dramatically. The wives of many of these men also have ties to the colonies; other women colonists have served as temple matrons or as general auxiliary board members.[3] And at least 16 mission training center presidents and 37 temple presidents have had direct connections to the colonies.[4]

Other notable leaders have emerged from the colonies, including scientists Carl and Henry Eyring, BYU president Franklin Harris, and US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (and governor of Michigan) George W. Romney.[5] Henry Eyring was the father of Henry B. Eyring, currently serving in the First Presidency. George W. Romney was the father of Mitt Romney, who is the former governor of Massachusetts and a past presidential nominee.

On June 5, 1997, President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke at a Juárez Academy fireside commemorating the 100-year anniversary of that institution. Remarking on the many leaders nurtured in the colonies, President Hinckley said,

"This place stands out in the history of our people. These little colonies in northern Mexico have made such a tremendous contribution to the Church over the more than a century that they have been established. . . . I didn't know before that this place had furnished more mission presidents than any other stake in the Church.

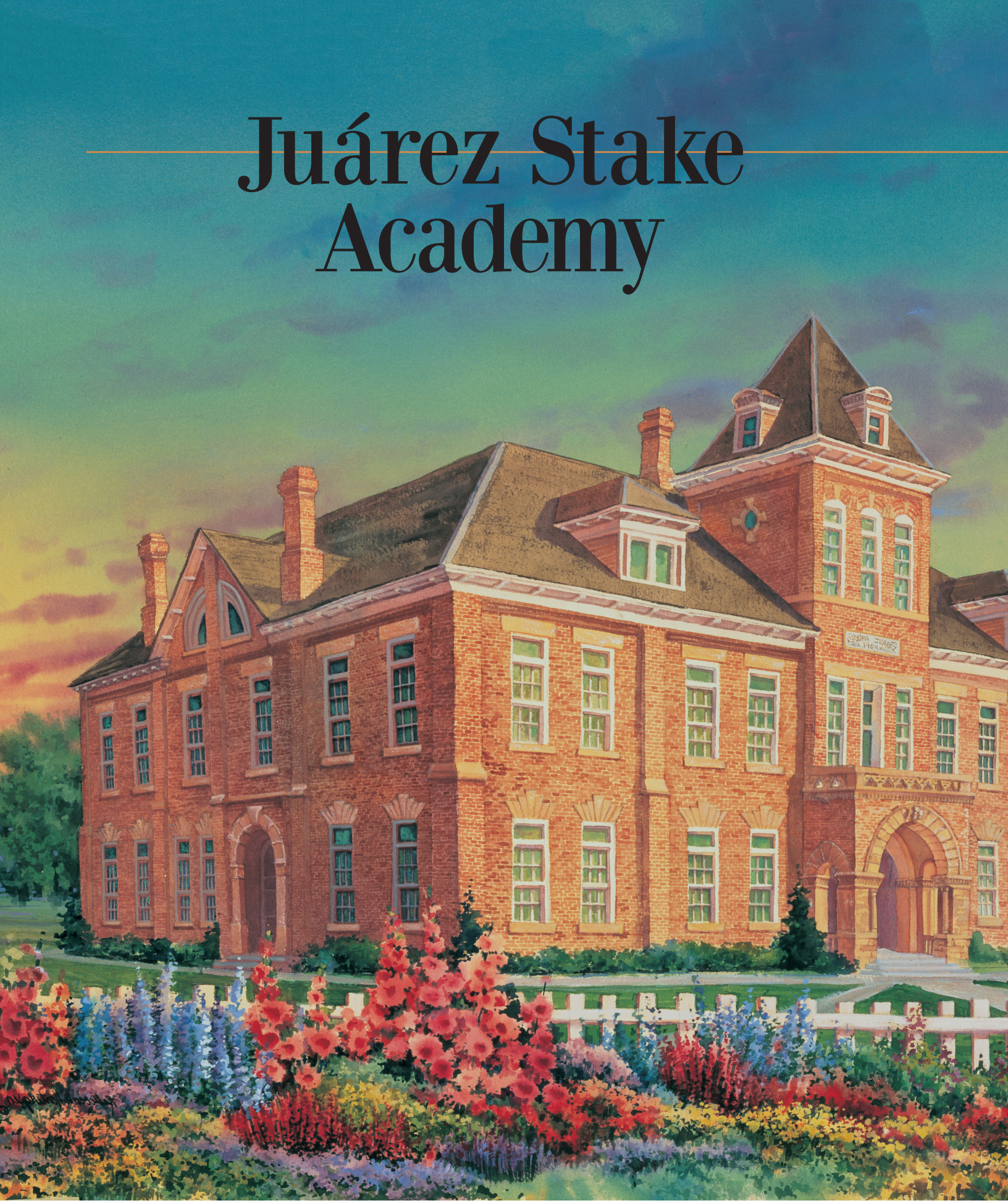
"I marvel at the contributions that have come out of these colonies, not only mission presidents who have gone across the world, but bishops and stake presidents, Area Presidents, regional representatives, General Authorities of the Church, including counselors in the First Presidency. And with all of that great contribution you have gone forward with your lives here and built these strong, wonderful communities."[6]

Often events that involved great sacrifices are discovered to have produced great and unexpected blessings with the passage of time.

1 Jason Swensen, "Mexican Colonies Offering Fruits of Leadership," *Church News,* 12 May 2001.
2 Lavon Brown Whetten, *Colonia Juárez, Commemorating 125 Years of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico*, privately printed, 2010.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 "Academy Exports Leaders Across Church," *Church News,* 14 Jun 1997.
6 "President Hinckley's Remarks at Juárez Academy Fireside," 5 Jun 1997, The Colonia Juárez Temple: A Prophet's Inspiration, *Religious Studies Center, BYU Religious Education*, online.

ART BY MAYNARD DIXON

Juárez Stake Academy



Academia Juárez

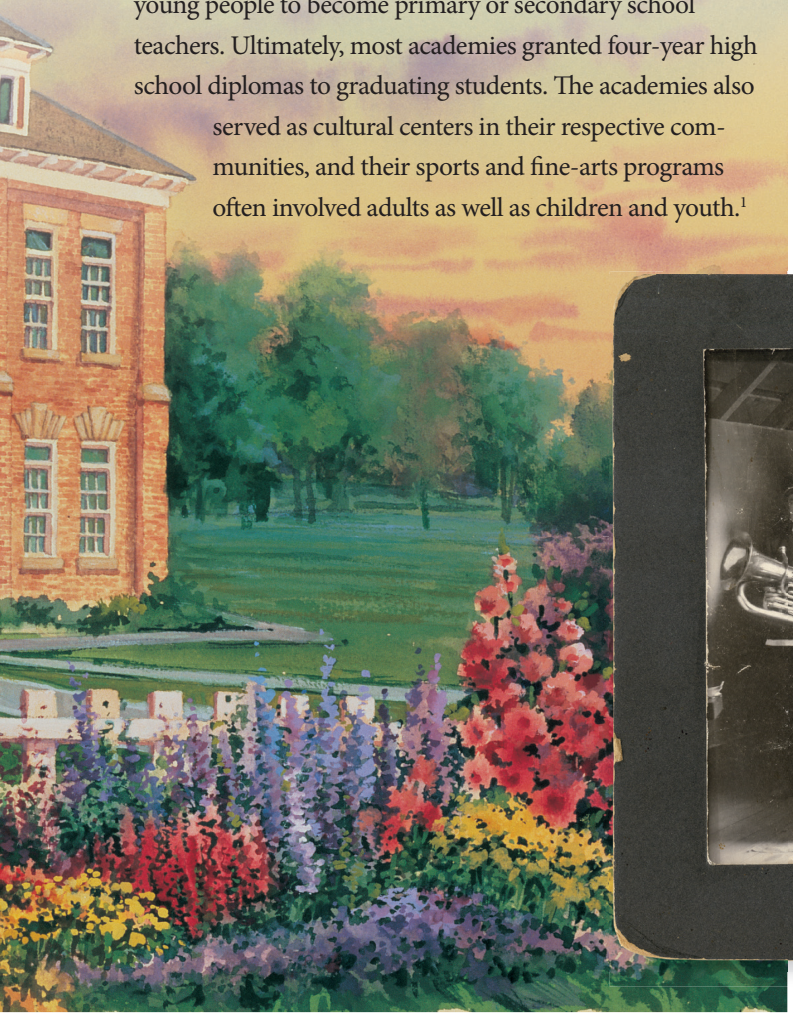
BY LAVON BROWN WHETTON

Between 1875 and 1910 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sponsored thirty-three academies for secondary education in the western United States, Canada and Mexico. The academy system emerged in response to the need for sound schools in newly settled areas.

The core curriculum of the academy system emphasized basic subjects—reading, writing, and mathematics—together with relevant mechanical, homemaking, or agricultural skills, and cultural development through music, art or home crafts, and even gymnastics. Normal courses (a traditional name for teacher education) were added later to the curricula of mature academies designated to prepare young people to become primary or secondary school teachers. Ultimately, most academies granted four-year high school diplomas to graduating students. The academies also served as cultural centers in their respective communities, and their sports and fine-arts programs often involved adults as well as children and youth.[1]

When the Juárez Stake Academy opened in Colonia Juárez in 1897 it naturally shared a mission and history with other Church-sponsored academies. Beginning in 1885, each of the original Mormon *colonias* had organized its own elementary school. As Nelle Spilsbury Hatch observes, "A spirit of learning actuated the early leaders" in Mexico, who were "ambitious to have the best for their children." Accordingly, "schools became their first concern," and "immediate provisions were made" to secure teachers and open rudimentary classrooms. Hatch continues, "In the short period of ten years, ten hard years, progress was made from a one-room ungraded school in a crude building" at Colonia Juárez to the "establishment of an accredited high school" there.[2]

This high school, the Juárez Stake Academy, was necessarily preceded by the December 1895 organization of the Juárez Stake with Anthony W. Ivins as president. At the first meeting of the local board of education, of which he automatically became head, Ivins proposed that "education





Juárez Stake Academy Band, 1905–1906.

ART BY REBECCA HARTVIGSEN

in the Juárez Stake be centralized" and that this objective be met through four specific measures:

- "making the school in Colonia Juárez into an academy" and maintaining "the elementary schools in the wards as supporting units of the system";
- strengthening "the central school" so that it might "dispense academic training for young men and women who otherwise would have to go abroad for it";
- insuring that "a building be erected to house the Juárez Stake Academy," with "work on the building to begin immediately";
- securing a "competent man to head the institution and educational system"[3]



Academy faculty, 1903-04. Front row: Lorraine Pearson, Arthur J. Done. Seated: Junius Romney, Maud Driggs, Guy C. Wilson, Elizabeth Butler, Esther Coombs. Standing: Anna Ivins, Charles McClellan, Montez Thurber, George Bailey, Eliza Clayson, Manrique Gonzalez, Ernest Hatch.

In September 1897 Dr. Karl G. Maeser, general superintendent of the Church School System, formally installed Guy C. Wilson, a young law student from Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah, as principal of the Juárez Stake Academy. Wilson was also named inspector of the elementary schools in the Juárez Stake—which had a combined enrollment of 176 students. Students in the *colonias* had been ranked according to reading ability, but Wilson soon changed this "reader" system to the more traditional age-based grade system, and by the end of his first year the Juárez Stake had a primary-school enrollment of 225. Fifteen students graduated from the eighth grade in the spring of 1898, and that autumn these fifteen became the first ninth-grade class in the new Juárez Stake Academy.[4]

By 1903 the enrollment at the Academy had swelled six-fold to nearly one hundred students, and the original building could no longer meet their needs. The school board determined that a new building would be constructed as soon as possible and a meeting was called to present the plan to the community. After explaining the purpose of the meeting, President Ivins set its tone by donating a five-acre lot as the building site. "It's the place for my dreams to materialize," he declared, "and a chance to let you see the picture I've had in mind ever since my first visit to the town."[5] He spoke of an Academy campus with multiple buildings, sports fields, and trees, a campus that would meet the academic and fitness needs of students as well as the cultural and recreational hopes of the community.

By the close of the meeting two hours later, every person in the room had pledged donations of cash or labor totaling $12,000. Ground was broken for the new building in late December of that same year, the cornerstone was laid in early January 1904, and the doors were opened for classes in September 1905. Shortly after classes began, the building was dedicated by LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith.[6] In 1908 high school diplomas were issued to the nine students in the first graduating class of the new campus.[7]

By 1912 there were twelve graduates, and prospects for growth were encouraging. In an address to students earlier that year, Superintendent Wilson had expressed great expectations for the future of the Academy: "In the history of our institution we have never faced a year so full of promise as the one now before us. Everything is propitious: good crops, good employment, good health, a strong faculty engaged, and there is no reason why we should not have the greatest enrollment ever. Experience has proven that but little money is needed if you only have the determination to work. There is nothing to be gained by going out of Mexico for anything that is taught in the Juárez Stake Academy. On the contrary there is every reason why we should all support our home institution and make it the pride of our people and a credit to Mexico. RESOLVE! WORK! COME!"[8]

Nevertheless, for nearly two years, the Mexican Revolution had been a troublesome fact of life for the colonists. And within weeks of Wilson's speech, it grew into a serious threat to property, religious freedom, and life itself. Many of the colonists began making plans to leave Mexico, and as more and more Saints joined the exodus to the United States, the Academy temporarily ceased to function. Even Professor Wilson removed his family from Mexico, never to return.

Within a year, however, some families had returned to the colonies, and, despite periodic raids on the colonies by roving bands of revolutionaries, classes at the Academy resumed in September 1913 and continued through the next decade and more without a break. The first post-exodus commencement exercises were held in the spring of 1915 with three graduating seniors.[9]

By 1920 the Revolution was winding down, and more families were returning to or settling in the colonies. Enrollment at the Academy continued to increase—and the next fifty years saw several new buildings added to the campus to meet the needs of larger student populations. One of the new buildings was a gymnasium/auditorium dedicated by Elder Marion G. Romney in December 1963. In an address at the dedicatory service, Elder Romney shared his conviction that the Academy "has a great future and an important mission to perform in this land."[10] In the dedicatory prayer he petitioned, "Let this institution shine forth in the earth and be a light to all the people of this great Republic, and let its influence reach into every part thereof."[11]

Through the early 1960s, the Academy was not an officially accredited school. The process of incorporating the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades (*secundaria*) with the Chihuahua State Department of Education was finally completed in 1963. The Academy was now officially known as Academia Juárez, A.C.[12] The tenth, eleventh, and twelve grades (*preparatoria*) were incorporated with the University of Ciudad Juárez in 1980,[13] insuring that both Mexico and the United States would recognize the validity of credits earned at the Academy. This accreditation has attracted increasing numbers of native Spanish-speaking students to the Academy, many from the surrounding region and some from throughout the state of Chihuahua and from larger Mexico.

While about one-fifth of enrolled students are not members of the LDS Church, they find the Academy's bilingual and bicultural education in a safe, value-centered environment to be highly appealing. A few non-member



Colonia Juárez Elementary School, 1911–1912.



Graduating Class of 1925.

students ultimately join the Church, but virtually all remain loyal to their alma mater, returning often for cultural programs, sporting events, or class reunions. Such alumni relationships frequently open political, social, and business doors for the Academy and for the Church. This fact, together with the numerous graduates of the Academy who have served LDS missions across Mexico and Latin America, underscore the historic mission of the Mexican colonies and of the Academy itself.

The Juárez Academy has long been a cultural center for the northern region of Chihuahua, and musical and dramatic presentations showcase the students and their school—and the communities that sponsor them. Musicals such as *The Sound of Music, South Pacific, Fiddler on the Roof,* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* are favorites of the Academy stage—as are dramas including *A Man for All Seasons, Little Women,* and *La Tia de Carlos.* At times, student groups are invited for traveling performances in places as far away as Mexico City.

The Academy's athletic teams also perform consistently well. Beginning in 1958 the girls' varsity basketball team won three state and national championships. Boys' basketball teams have also won state and national championships in Mexico and invitational championships in the US. American football was introduced at the Academy by then-director Max Spilsbury in 1965, and the resultant popularity of that sport continues to grow throughout the state of Chihuahua. Soccer, track and field, tennis, and volleyball are likewise popular at the Academy.[14]

Over the years, a variety of dignitaries have visited the Academy, ranging from revolutionary generals to Apostles of the Lord. Visitors are graciously received and entertained by students and community members, and most visitors leave with warm, indelible memories of their experiences. A significant visit occurred in November 1989 when President Carlos Salinas de Gortari became the first Mexican president to make a stopover at the Mormon colonies. Residents remember that it was truly striking to see five large military helicopters sweep into the valley and land on the campus of the Academy. Several hundred guests, including students, joined President Salinas for dinner in the Academy auditorium, and the Academy band performed a brief concert in his honor. Studentbody officers had the singular opportunity of presenting President Salinas with a Book of Mormon and Academy memorabilia which he graciously accepted.[15]

The 1997 visit of LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley during the Academy's centennial celebration will long remain a crowning event in the history of the school. Many campus buildings had been recently remodeled and their rededication was scheduled concurrently with the centennial celebration and commencement exercises in early June. In his address to graduates, President Hinckley declared, "I cannot begin to tell you what an honor it is to be with you on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Academia Juárez," noting that "here generations of pupils have come to learn. Here in an atmosphere of faith and an environment of learning they have come to equip themselves for the future."[16] Counseling graduates who had "lived in this chosen and quiet community" and who would now "go

forth into the noisy and busy world," President Hinckley suggested they adhere to four values that would "bring happiness throughout their lives": to "keep the faith," to "serve the Lord," to "prepare for a good marriage and a solid home," and to "never stop learning."[17]

In the concluding lines of his dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley pled: "God bless this graduating class that they may go forth to accomplish great things in the world. . . . May peace be in these communities. May there be security and place of refuge from the world. May those who live here be blessed with the good things of life and may those who go from here always have beautiful memories of their time of residence here. . . . We rededicate ourselves to Thy cause as we rededicate these facilities and ask that Thou will accept of them for the blessing of Thy people."[18]

More than two decades after President Hinckley's historic visit, the Academy continues to flourish. While the demographic makeup of its student body has shifted, with 90% of the students now coming from native Spanish-speaking homes and 10% from homes of descendants of original Anglo-Saxon colonists, the same spirit of dedicated preparation for service continues to motivate students to strive for excellence. They are eager to acquire training enabling them to become bilingual and bicultural ambassadors for the Church and righteous citizens who will strengthen their families and communities throughout the great nation of Mexico and across the world.



Below: Academy group during revolutionary days including Nelle Spilsbury (in white dress, front row).



1 Daniel H. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* v. 1 (1992), 11–2.

2 Nelle Spilsbury Hatch, *Colonia Juárez, A Mormon Village* (1954), 149.

3 Albert Kenyon Wagner and Leona Farnsworth Wagner, *The Juárez Stake Academy, 1897–1997: The First One Hundred Years* (privately published 1997), 5–6.

4 Ibid.

5 Wagner and Wagner 7.

6 LaVon Brown Whetten, *Colonia Juárez: Commemorating 125 Years of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (privately published 2010), 31.

7 N. Hatch 153.

8 Ernestine Hatch, *Academia Juárez, A.C.* (privately published 1976), 17.

9 Clarence F. Turley and Anna Tenney Turley, "The Juárez Stake, 1885–1980," in *History of the Mormon Colonies In Mexico* (privately published 1980), 108.

10 Whetten 97.

11 Whetten 98.

12 Whetten 148. A.C. stands for Asociación Civil which means a civil entity that is registered with the federal government. A school registered in this way is eligible to be accredited by one or more of the education councils in Mexico.

13 Wagner and Wagner 100.

14 Whetten 149.

15 Whetten 150.

16 Virginia Romney, transcript of audio recording made June 6, 1997.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

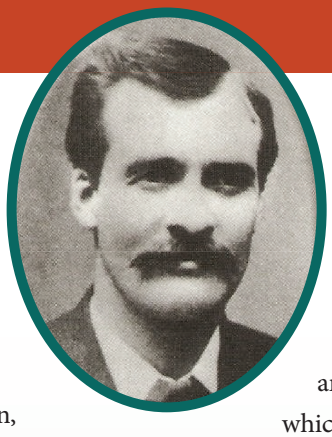


ART BY NOE PEREZ

The Return from Exile



BY LAVON BROWN WHETTON



Anson B. Call

Wars and Rumors of Wars

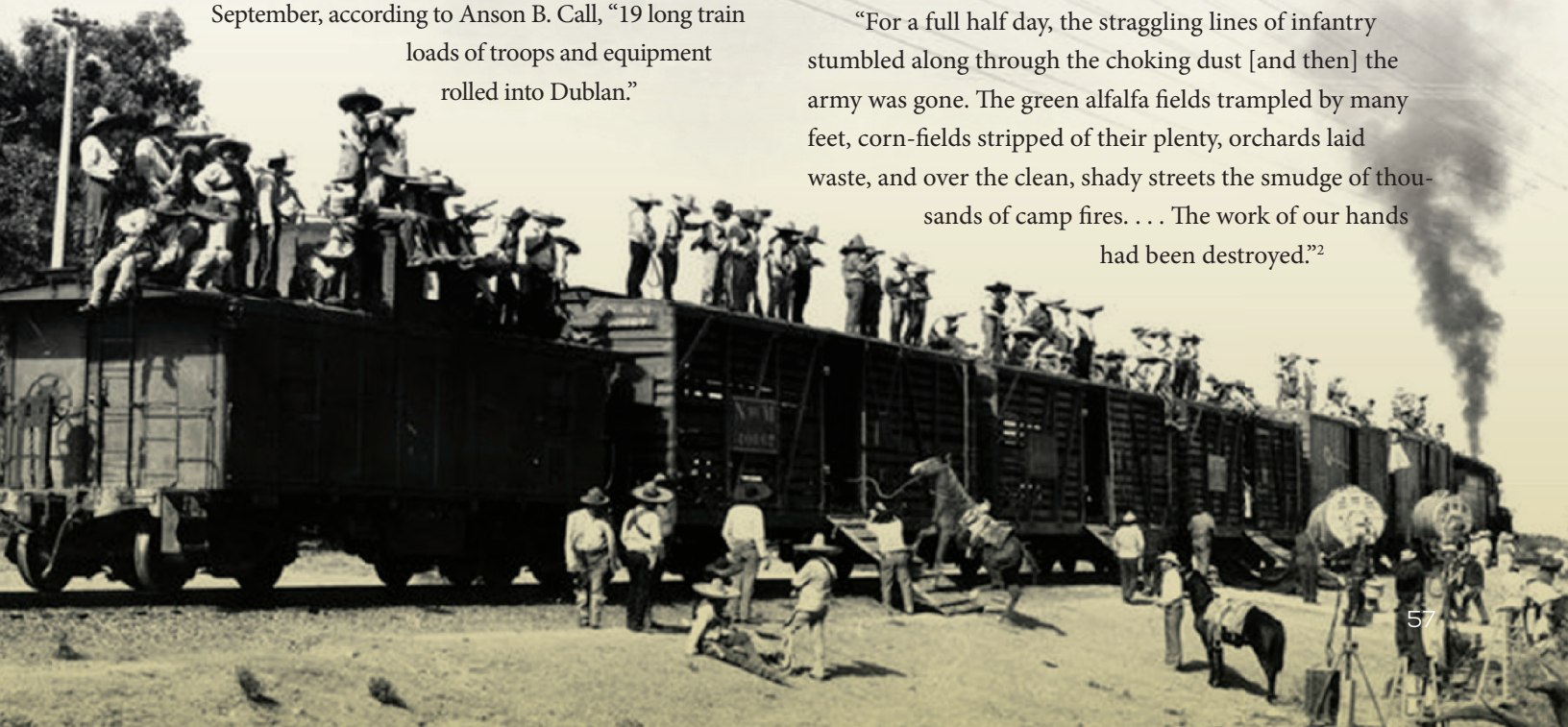
When the colonizing Saints in Mexico left their homes during the exodus of 1912, most of them believed their absence would be temporary. However, due to the prolonged Revolution, only about one-fourth of the pre-exodus population ever returned. Those who did return would spend another seven years living with uncertainty and more than a little fear as roving bands of revolutionaries passed through the area making their accustomed demands.

The period from September 1915 through March 1916 was particularly harrowing, especially for those living in Colonia Dublán. Pancho Villa, having suffered several defeats in the southern part of the country in early 1915, devised a plan to move all his men into northern Chihuahua. In late September, according to Anson B. Call, "19 long train loads of troops and equipment rolled into Dublan."

"It was indeed a sight never to be forgotten by those who beheld it. Freight cars by the hundreds, on the tops of which rode the soldiers; in the cars proper were loaded horses, cannons, and ammunition, provision, etc. In fact, everything which goes to equip an army was there. . . . There were in all, more than 10,000 persons and about 8,000 horses."[1]

Of course Villa himself was unable to provide food for his soldiers and feed for his livestock, and so he required them to live off the land—or off the settlers who owned it. The Mexican Saints were among those in northern Chihuahua who, for four weeks, bore the onerous and sometimes frightening burden of supporting Villa's men. Finally, on October 16, Villa pulled his troops out of Chihuahua and headed for Sonora. Grace Zenor Pratt described the Saints' emotions as they watched the revolutionary forces leave:

"For a full half day, the straggling lines of infantry stumbled along through the choking dust [and then] the army was gone. The green alfalfa fields trampled by many feet, corn-fields stripped of their plenty, orchards laid waste, and over the clean, shady streets the smudge of thousands of camp fires. . . . The work of our hands had been destroyed."[2]



On November 2, Villa attacked Agua Prieta, located across the border from Douglas, Arizona, only to be surprised by 6500 troops aligned with the newly recognized president of Mexico, Venustiano Carranza. Anticipating just such an attack from Villa's forces, the US government had allowed the loyalist troops to be transported by American rail over from El Paso, Texas, to Douglas. Villa lost nearly half his men in the defeat, and surviving troops broke into various bands, each with its own leaders.

Consumed with rage at the loss, Villa vowed to destroy all Americans in his path as he made plans to return to northern Chihuahua and regroup. During the first three weeks of December weary advance troops began to straggle back toward Dublán. On Christmas Day, Bishop Call and others were requested to meet with a General Díaz who had been left to guard the Mormon colonies when Villa departed for Sonora. Díaz had reports that Villa's men then making their way to northern Chihuahua intended to end up in Dublán where, according to their threats, they would kill every man, woman, and child and then loot and burn the town. Díaz cautioned the men to return home and prepare as best and as quickly as they could for whatever might happen.[3]

The following morning, December 26, Bishop Call began visiting every home in Dublán, encouraging people to gather into groups of five to eight families for the night. Late that evening at least one home was plundered and another was burned. Three armed men also forced their way into the Call home and proceeded to gather up whatever they wanted. The women and children were upstairs, and the marauders insisted they were going up. Anson stood in front of the stairway door, spread his arms across it and said, "You are not going upstairs! By the power of the holy priesthood which I hold, you will not go up these stairs."[4] After some time, the marauders left but threatened to return. Fortunately, they did not—but that night became known as Noche Triste—"Night of Sadness and Fear."[5]

With the new year came a brief respite described in a letter written by Anson's wife Julia: "I've never lacked a needful article. This winter we gave and gave and gave of everything to starving natives, and it was surely like the widow's mite. Our larders were never empty. . . . It's great to be on the Lord's side."[6] But the peace would be short-lived. On March 9 Villa crossed the US border with about 485 men and staged his ill-fated attack on Columbus, New Mexico. During the brief two-hour battle Villa lost one hundred or more of his men. Seven American soldiers and at least ten civilians were killed; an additional seven Americans were wounded.[7]

Fully as angry as he had been following the battle at Douglas the previous November, Villa declared he would return to northern Chihuahua and kill all Americans and Mexican employees of Americans in the district. He and his men headed south toward Ascensión and then on to Corralitos and





Dublán. At Corralitos, some sixteen miles from Dublán, he executed the Polanco family—father and sons—because they were employed by Americans.[8]

Having learned of the disastrous Columbus attack and Villa's subsequent actions in Corralitos, Bishop Call and his counselors made an emergency trip to Colonia Juárez to consult with Stake President Joseph C. Bentley—who told the anxious men that they knew the conditions in Dublán better than he and that they were to do as they thought best.

When Call and his counselors arrived back in Dublán, an emotional town meeting was underway. Call listened carefully to proposals that had been discussed in his absence. After all had spoken, he stood thoughtfully for a few moments, then quietly said, "Let us all go home. I feel impressed that we should go back to our homes, pray, blow out all our lights, and go to bed."[9] His counsel was, to put it mildly, unexpected. But when one man declared in frustration, "That's a hell of a thing to tell us to do!" another man quickly said, "Bishop Call has been prompted to tell us what to do. Let's do it." A third quietly affirmed, "That is the word of the Lord to me," then turned, left the room, and started toward his home. Before long everyone dispersed and followed the bishop's counsel.[10]

Call himself later recorded: "That night Villa's army came in [to the valley] as far as the cattle chute at Corralitos, then went east and into the mountains. We slept well all night and didn't know when they came. Some of Villa's men later told Nephi Thayne that when they got to the cattle corrals they saw bright lights all over and could see many men walking back and forth armed, and they were afraid to come into town and attack as they had planned to do. As far as I know, there wasn't a light in the whole town."[11]

In a letter to Elder Anthony W. Ivins written about a week later, Bishop Call reported: "Villa . . . passed almost through our colony at night . . . leaving us unmolested. There are many rumors afloat here why he did not visit us. We know why he did not do it. The God of heaven worked upon him in answer not only to our prayers, but to [those of] thousands and thousands of his faithful Saints. We feel that no greater miracle has been wrought in the history of the Mormon Church than this."[12]

Within days of the raid on Columbus, US president Woodrow Wilson directed that an armed force be sent into Mexico with the objective of capturing Villa and preventing further raids by his band. Under the command of Brigadier General John J. Pershing, several thousand American soldiers marched into northern Chihuahua. By March 17 they were encamped near Colonia Dublán. "Camp Dublán," as they called it, functioned as the primary headquarters of the American troops during their ten-month stay in





Mexico. Although their presence brought a certain sense of security and peace to the colonists, it also stirred anger and bitter resentment among their Mexican neighbors.

By late fall of 1916 Pershing had not been able to capture Villa, and the American troops prepared to return to the United States. This brought yet another time of uncertainty to the colonists as they contemplated what might happen once the troops were gone. Villa had publicly vowed to track down and wreak vengeance on any who had helped the American forces in any way. In late January 1917, Bishop Call received an urgent telegram from Utah Senator Reed Smoot stating: "Secretary of War advises me that Gen. Pershing has been instructed to advise Mormon Colonists to withdraw from Mexico. . . . Make preparations for withdrawal at once. See General Pershing."[13]

Given Smoot's warning, many Mormons in Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez once again prepared for an exodus from Mexico, most of them departing with General Pershing and his troops in late January 1917. A news report dated January 30 read, in part: "'Mormons were riding in automobiles, covered wagons of the prairie schooner type, in farm wagons and on horses and mules. . . . They were driving their milch cows ahead of them. . . . Nothing that could be brought out was left behind. . . . Many . . . carried all of their worldly possessions with them."[14] As the Americans left, Villa and other revolutionaries claimed that they had successfully driven the gringos out. However, a news bulletin dated February 1 reported that one hundred Americans had chosen to remain in Colonia Juárez; another reported that seven families were staying on in Colonia Dublán.[15]

Brighter Days

On May 1, 1917, the political situation in Mexico took a positive turn with the implementation of a new federal constitution. With the promise of greater stability, significant numbers of Mormon refugees turned back to their homes in the colonies. Over the next several years, life in the colonies began to be characterized by peace and security.

Shortly after Elder Melvin J. Ballard was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1919, he made the first of many visits to the colonies. He encouraged the colonists to plant productive orchards, raise fine beef and dairy cattle, and to



Elder Melvin J. Ballard

grow crops. He tried to help them understand their mission in Mexico—to supply missionaries for what was then known as the Mexican Mission and to teach the gospel to Lamanite peoples through both words and actions.[16] During subsequent visits he often reminded the colonists to improve the appearance of their homes and surroundings, promising them that "prosperity would reward their faithfulness."[17]

The 1921 census reported that Dublán had a population of 325; Juárez, 240; Chuichupa, about 150; Garcia, about 140; and Pacheco, about 75. The colonies of Diaz, Morelos, and Oaxaca were by that point deserted.[18] When W. Ernest Young was sustained as bishop of the Colonia Juárez Ward in March 1922, he urged fellow ward members to obey the counsel of Elder Ballard by repairing bridges, canals, fences, and buildings and by planting more orchards. Young observed that "fruit raising was a basic and saving industry when the town began, and it can solve the problem of scant acreage again," providing "a major cash income for this colony now as it did earlier."[19]

Young further declared: "It is one thing to found a colony and quite another thing to save and hold it after years of revolution have destroyed so much. But let us not lose heart, we have in our veins the blood of the best pioneer stock in the Church. We are the offspring of men who established a mission in this land—a mission that many now predict will be abandoned, but which we, if faithful, will be the means of preserving."[20]

In January 1926, a new civil law dictated that all "ministers" in Mexico be Mexican-born.[21] Although the colonies had consistently supplied the Mexican Mission with able missionaries, this law placed added responsibilities upon the colonists. Between 1926 and 1945, many young men and women were called to full-time missionary service shortly after graduating from the Academy. Their faithfulness kept the Mexican Mission functional, even during World War II, when many Mormon males in the US were conscripted into military service.

Continued Recovery

Although recovery in the colonies was slow, it was steady. As early as 1923 John Cornyn, foreign news correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, reported that the Mormons' farms, gardens, houses, and schools were "by far the best and most striking of the foreign colonies in Mexico"; he also praised their reservoirs and irrigation systems. About this time, a cheese-making plant was established in Dublán, and "Queso Dublán" was successfully marketed throughout Mexico until the early 1940s.

By December 1944, when David S. Brown was ordained bishop in Colonia Juárez and Edgar L. Wagner in Colonia Dublán, the two largest colonies were enjoying their most prosperous years to date. A new chapel had been built and dedicated in Dublán; there were new gymnasium and classroom buildings on the Academy campus in Juárez. The Colonial Poultry Producers Association was created in 1949 to provide opportunities for family businesses that could supplement existing incomes.[22] The CPPA specialized in egg production; eggs were shipped by rail in iced boxcars to major cities across Mexico. According to association records, total income from sales in 1950 amounted to $3,000,000 pesos.[23] Gradually, the increasing costs of production and shipping and the surplus of American eggs on the Mexican market weakened the association. By the end of 1976 the Colonial Poultry Producers Association was discontinued.

Deep wells drilled in the late 1930s allowed for larger farms and orchards. By the 1950s the fruit industry was growing rapidly. For years apples had been the primary crop, but peaches ripened sooner, and the market for peaches was more extensive. The completion of a modern paved highway to Nuevo Casas Grandes and on to Dublán and Juárez in 1956 marked the beginning of a new era for the colonies, especially for the fruit business. Using refrigerated trailers, the colonies could supply large city markets across



Bueno! Juarez Academy centennial

Stake excels in producing leadership

BY JOHN L. HART
Church News staff writer

COLONIA JUAREZ, MEXICO

President Gordon B. Hinckley rode from the nearest airport for more than three hours over a hot desert to attend graduation ceremonies of a small high school in an obscure part of northern Mexico.

His arrival June 5 in the Mormon colonies in the state of Chihuahua marked the first visit here of a Church president. It also illustrates the regard that the Church holds for the colonies, founded here in 1885, and their pride and joy, the Juarez Academy.

President Hinckley spoke at a fireside and at graduation exercises on the academy's 100th anniversary. The academy is the sole survivor of the Church's academies, a chain of stake-sponsored prep schools started mostly in the 19th century. From this remote institution have graduated a remarkable number of Church leaders. (See related story on page 7.) Among them is Elder Eran A. Call of the Seventy (Class of '48), who also spoke at the fireside.

Now part of the Church Educational System, Juarez Academy is an inseparable element of the Colonia Juarez Mexico Stake. Without the academy, many stake members would leave in search of better educational opportunities for their youth. Without the stake, the academy would lose strong priesthood advisory support that has helped maintain its high standards in an anything-goes world. These standards, say local leaders, are directly related to the high success rate of academy graduates.

John J. Whetten (Class of '53) has a 40-year career at the academy and is the director of the 460-pupil school, which roughly corresponds with a U.S. junior high and high school.

Outside influences offer the most difficult challenges, but ones the academy meets. High standards of grooming and personal conduct are maintained through strong priesthood-leader and parental support.

"We consider this home," said Brother Whetten. "We are like a large family. And, yes, we plan to continue to maintain these standards. That's what makes the difference.

"It appalls me what I hear and see that faces schools elsewhere," he said.

Pres. Meredith I. Romney of the Colonia Juarez Stake (Class of '59) expects the academy to grow and the colonists to stay. "We are optimistic about the future," he said.

Pres. Romney added: "We are thrilled to have President Hinckley come and be with us on the celebration."

As the events proceeded, it was difficult to know who was more appreciative: the local members for President Hinckley, or President Hinckley for the local members.

President Hinckley spoke at a fireside attended by some 6,000 members and friends from the area, and addressed ceremonies for the 100th anniversary graduating class. He also rededicated the buildings of the academy that have undergone extensive remodeling.

Following his fireside address, he came down from the stand to greet Lorna Call Alder, 91, (class of '25) with whom he once served on the General Sunday School Board.

His visit was the highlight of a week of celebrating the centennial of Juarez Academy. In the celebration, in addition to the fireside and graduation exercises, were a parade, an original musical play, class reunions, a barbecue lunch, an alumni meeting and a centennial ball with an elegant floor show.

Nowhere was the magnetism of the celebration more evident than in an alumni meeting. In attendance — and acting like students with the teacher out of the classroom — were graduates of classes as far

Continued on page 4





Left, beneath an awning at rear of old academy building, some 6,000 people wave to President Gordon B. Hinckley following fireside. Below, President Hinckley waves after graduation ceremonies at Juarez Academy.

Photos by John L. Hart

Mexico with peaches and apples. More orchards were planted, and the colonies were soon numbered among Mexico's primary fruit producers.

Centennials

Between 1985 and 1997, the two remaining Mormon colonies in Mexico—Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez—hosted three different centennial celebrations. Each brought the return of many former colony residents.

Throughout 1985 numerous events were held celebrating the hundred-year anniversary of the founding of the colonies; these events culminated in a week-long celebration in August. Parades, talent shows, athletic events, family and ward reunions, and a centennial pageant were the highlights of the celebration. Visitors from thirteen Mexican states and thirty US states attended, together with residents of ten other countries or provinces, including Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, and Paraguay.[24]

In February 1990 the Colonia Juárez Mexico Stake was divided, resulting in the creation of the Colonia Dublán Stake. In December 1995 the two stakes jointly sponsored the centennial celebration of the creation of the original Juárez Stake. Attendees were encouraged to continue to share the gospel and to raise their children in light and truth.[25]

Finally, the centenary of the establishment of the Juárez Stake Academy was held during graduation week in June 1997. Much to the surprise of all concerned, President Gordon B. Hinckley indicated that he wanted to attend the celebration and



to rededicate the remodeled Academy buildings. During a special fireside address attended by more than 5500 people, President Hinckley declared, "This place stands out in the history of our people. These little colonies in northern Mexico have made such a tremendous contribution to the Church over the more than a century that they have been established."[26]

He continued: "I just wanted to come down here and thank you . . . for what you have done, for the generations of Latter-day Saints who, in these little narrow valleys have kept the faith and lived the gospel and, generation after generation, all by yourselves down here, as it were, have gone on serving the Lord in truth and righteousness.

". . . Some people in the Church feel a little sorry for you. You seem to be so far away from everybody, but your isolation has been your strength. You have been united together. You have been as a great family. You have shared your sacrifice. You have shared your sorrow. You have helped one another in times of trouble and distress. You had to because you were alone. You have become as one great family. Keep it up. Most of your young people will leave here and will probably never come back except to show their children where they grew up, but there will still be a strong congregation of the Saints here. Stay that way. Live as you have lived in the past."[27]

During this same fireside, President Hinckley also declared, "I would like to see the time come when all of our people throughout the world could get to a temple without too much inconvenience. I think you are about as far away as anybody and I don't know quite what to do about you."[28] Little did anyone in attendance imagine that there would soon be a beautiful temple on the hillside overlooking the spot where President Hinckley greeted and blessed Church members in 1997.

During his address at the Academy's commencement exercises, President Hinckley observed that "the richest fruit of these colonies has not been apples or peaches or chili peppers, it has been young men and women of faith and capacity and ability." As others have emphasized, a surprising number of general authorities, mission presidents, temple presidents, and missionary training center presidents have had their roots in the Mexican colonies. More importantly, missionaries from the colonies have served in every country of Central and South America and throughout Mexico—and in Spanish-speaking missions across the world.

Although the original nine Mexican colonies were ultimately reduced to two, faithful men and women of courage were able to persevere. Through united effort, hard work, and righteous living they survived civil war, natural disasters, and poverty to become successful community leaders and loyal citizens of their nation. Countless men and women throughout both Mexico and the United States are proud to proclaim that their roots grow deep in the tiny Mormon Colonies of Mexico.

1 William G. Hartley and Lorna Call Alder, *Anson Bowen Call—Bishop of Colonia Dublan* (2007), 378–9.

2 Hartley and Alder 387.

3 Hartley and Alder 392.

4 Hartley and Alder 399.

5 Hartley and Alder 400.

6 LaVon Brown Whetten, *Colonia Juárez: Commemorating 125 Years of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (privately published 2010), 61.

7 Whetten 62.

8 Thomas Cottam Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (1938), 239.

9 Hartley and Alder 410.

10 Ibid.

11 Hartley and Alder 412.

12 Hartley and Alder 411.

13 Hartley and Alder 463.

14 Hartley and Alder 467.

15 Hartley and Alder 470.

16 Clarence F. Turley and Anna Tenney Turley, "The Juárez Stake, 1885–1980," in *History of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (privately published 1975), 115.

17 Whetten 74.

18 Hartley and Alder 520.

19 Whetten 73.

20 Whetten 73–4.

21 Hartley and Alder 526.

22 Nelle Spilsbury Hatch, *Colonia Juárez, A Mormon Village* (1954), 256.

23 Turley 130.

24 Whetten 127.

25 Whetten 140.

26 Virginia Hatch Romney and Richard O. Cowan, *The Colonia Juárez Temple: A Prophet's Inspiration* (2009), 34.

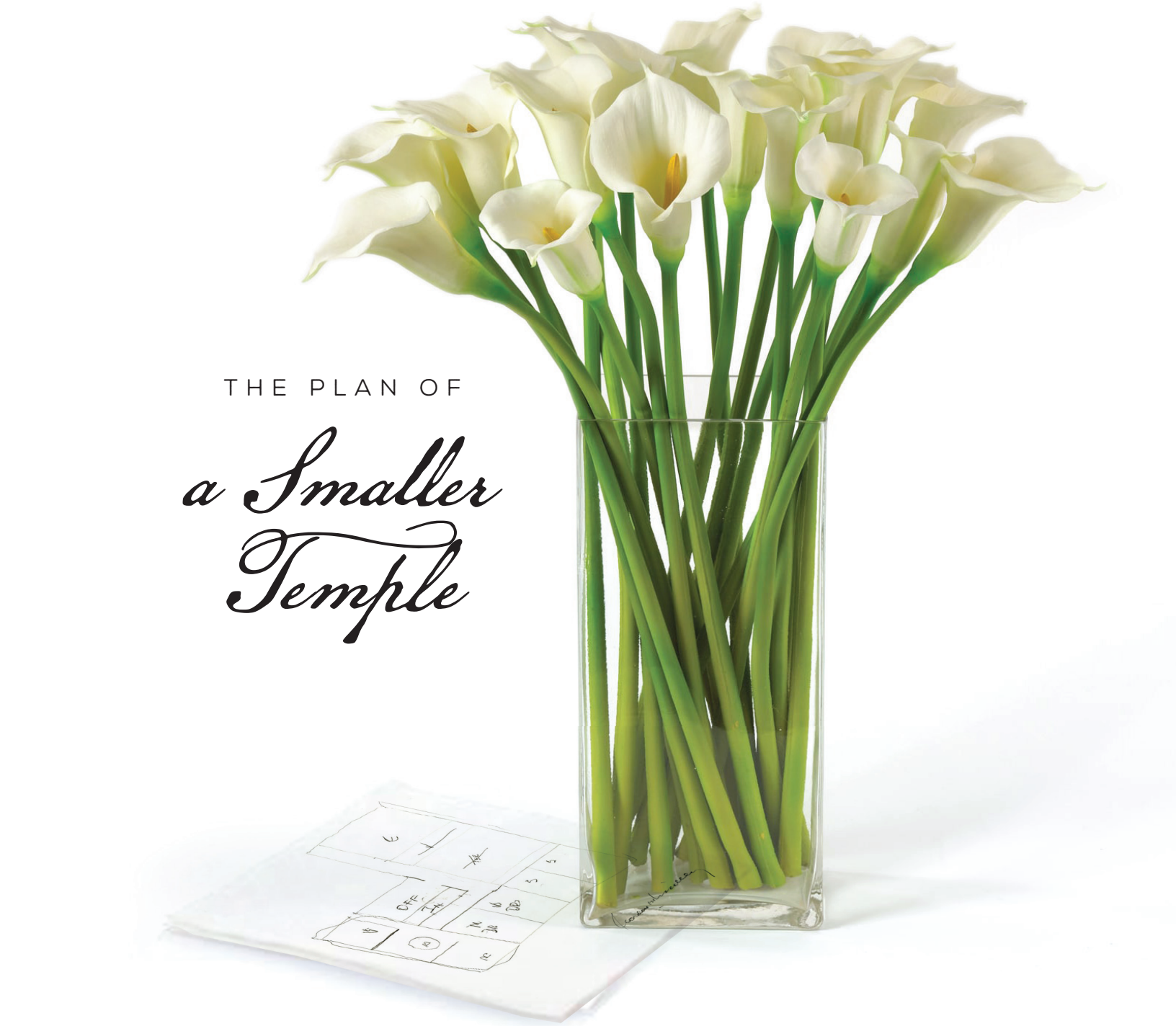
27 Romney and Cowan 177–83.

28 Ibid.



THE PLAN OF

a Smaller Temple



"It was here in Northern Mexico"

BY KENT V. LOTT

The source of details for this article is the personal journal of F. Keith Stepan of the Temple Construction Department.

A revelation from the Lord in 1997 brought to life the idea of smaller temples to serve smaller Church populations. President Hinckley shared something about the origins of that revelation when he offered the dedicatory prayer for the Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Temple. "It was here in Northern Mexico," he prayed, "that Thou didst reveal the idea and the plan of a smaller temple, complete in every necessary detail, but suited in size to the needs and circumstances of the Church membership in this area of Thy vineyard. That revelation came of a desire and a prayer to help Thy people of these colonies who have been true and loyal."[2]

The roots of the story of President Hinckley's ambitious efforts to build temples all over the world started well before he became President of the Church. During his travels abroad Elder Hinckley often wondered if it would be possible for smaller, less expensive temples to be built throughout the world. His hope was to find a way to take temples to the people instead of requiring members to travel long distances to temples, often at great expense. He even discussed his desire with President Harold B. Lee.[3]

In 1992 during a Temple Sites and Construction Committee meeting Elder Hinckley expressed frustration about the time required to develop and approve plans for new temples. He assured the group that it was "the season to build temples" and that the Church needed to build more of them and more quickly.[4]

President Hinckley had indeed been prepared to meet new temple-building directives that were to come by revelation and inspiration from the Lord. He had been inspired early in his ministry to ensure that temple ordinances in the Bern Switzerland Temple were presented in multiple languages. As a counselor to three presidents of the Church, he had been assigned to watch over the building of several temples. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley in 1993 noted that he had dedicated or rededicated forty of the forty-five temples that were then in operation. He would dedicate sixty-three more during his thirteen years as President of the Church.[5]

In the 1995 April Conference, Gordon B. Hinckley was sustained as president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As soon as the new First Presidency had settled into a routine in the summer of 1995, President Hinckley made this unexpected announcement, "I have a burning desire that a temple be located within reasonable access to Latter-day Saints throughout the world. We can proceed only so fast. We try to see that each temple will be in an excellent location, where there will be good neighbors over a long period of time. The work is moving about as fast as we can go. It is my constant prayer that somehow it might be speeded up so that more of our people might have easier access to a sacred house of the Lord."[6]

Two years later, in June 1997, a special trip to Colonia Juárez, Mexico, triggered the long-awaited revelation that President Hinckley had been seeking from the Lord. The faithful Saints in that area had invited President Hinckley to participate in the rededication of the century-old and newly renovated Academy School, owned by the Church, and were very excited when he accepted their invitation.



After flying from Salt Lake City to El Paso, Texas, President Hinckley traveled three hours by car across the northern Mexico deserts to the small town of Colonia Juárez.[7]

President Hinckley was impressed with the faithful Saints and their preparation for his visit. He had a wonderful time with them. The evening after his arrival, President Hinckley presented a fireside message where a large body of Saints listened intently to his every word. He spoke of the beginnings of the Mexican colonies, of the sacrifices of early colonists in the face of great difficulties, and of their unwavering faith and obedience. He quietly reminded the Saints in this remote, lone stake of Zion, that over time, they had sent into the world more mission presidents than any other stake in the Church. Over and over he expressed his love to these faithful people. He called down the blessings of the Lord upon them.

After the fireside, before he retired for the evening. President Hinckley spent some time walking through the streets of Colonia Juárez, admiring the clustered homes and buildings of this faithful little community nestled tightly in a narrow Mexican valley.

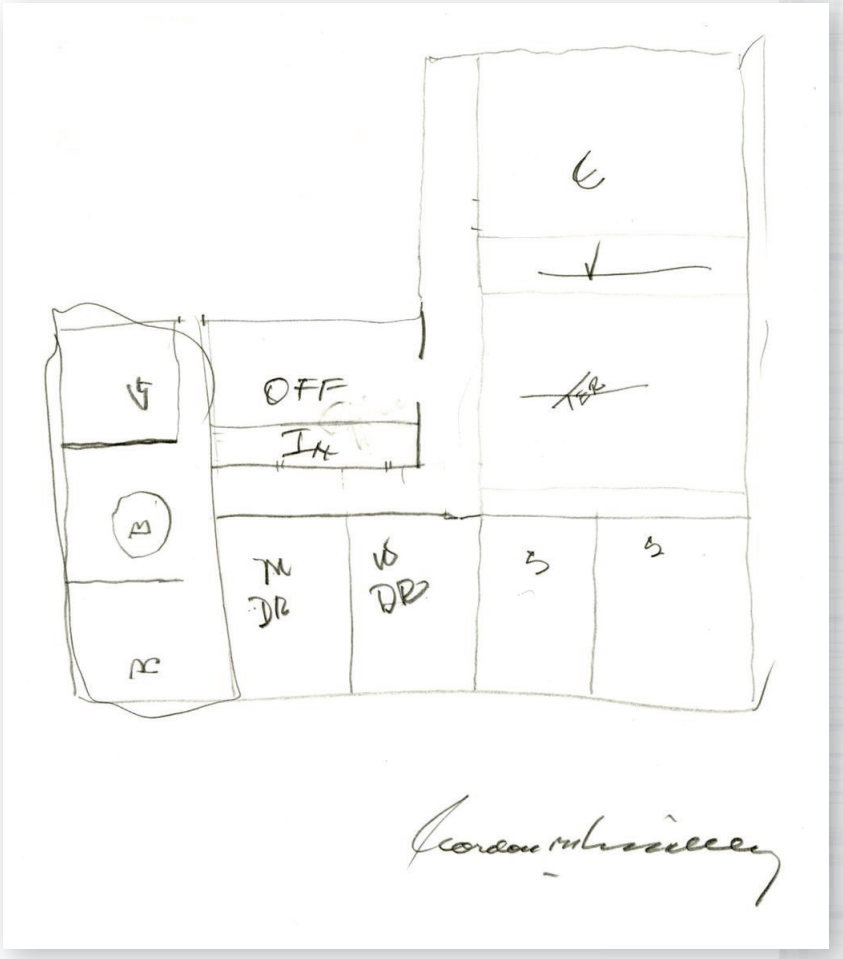
The next day, as he re-crossed the Mexican desert on his way home to Salt Lake City, he thought

more about the faithful service of the Saints in Colonias Juárez and Dublán. He pondered their humility and their need for temple worship. He later said, "I thought of these things and asked what could be done [for these good men and women]. The concept of the smaller temple came into my mind."[8]

President Hinckley later referred to his impression as revelation and emphasized that the thought came "clearly" to his mind. Wanting to record specific details of this inspiration, of the concept that was being revealed to him, he took from his briefcase a sheet of white paper and sketched out a possible floor plan of a small temple that could easily be built in Colonia Juárez and other remote locations filled with faithful Mormon Saints. He visualized what the architectural plan of a small temple might look like. In his drawing there were no large assembly rooms or waiting areas. Cafeterias and laundries would not be necessary.[9] Only rooms and services vital to performing the ordinances of the temple would be required, and so the prophet sketched out areas for baptisms and preliminary ordinances, endowments, and sealings. The temple entry and other needed rooms were indicated. As he finished the sketch, he added his well-known signature, "Gordon B. Hinckley," at the bottom of the sheet. Thus, the concept of the smaller temple was given life, and a new vision for greatly increased temple building had its beginning.[10]

When President Hinckley announced in the 1998 April Conference his heartfelt desire to have 100 temples built and operating by the year 2000, the temple construction work received much greater emphasis. The challenge would fall to the Temple Construction Department with support from the Temple Department, Finance, Purchasing, and other Church Departments. They would have to do things they had never done before. Significantly, President Hinckley did not want to expand any of these departments. He told their leadership that they "must do this with the current staff members that you have in place." Prayerful effort, new design and construction processes, and divine help were mandatory to the successful realization of President Hinckley's vision. Of the pressing challenge, President Hinckley himself said, "This will be a tremendous undertaking. Nothing even approaching it has ever been tried before."[11]

The Colonia Juárez temple was the third of the first three "small" temples; the others were the Monticello Utah and Anchorage Alaska temples. These first three established a pattern of wonderful cooperation among the Church's administrative staff, the general contractors, and the local communities





of Saints. At times it seemed these disparate bodies were one big family focused on simply making things work. There were no conflicting objectives, no desire for personal recognition, tribute, or acclaim. All three small temples were the fruition of hours of hard and tireless work, donated labor and materials, and volunteer support from the members of the local Church units. Landscaping, cleaning, the placement of furnishings, and the organizing of open houses were carried out by local volunteers under the supervision of the Public Affairs and Temple Departments. Local Saints took great pride in their work and felt humble responsibility for *their* new small temple.

The youth of the Colonia Juárez area were especially motivated to do all they could to prepare for the temple open house and dedication. A few nights before the open house was to begin, rainy weather threatened the completion of temple landscaping. The youth and their leaders stepped in, quite literally into mud, planting flowers and shrubs, laying lawn sod, and cleaning the exterior surfaces of their temple.

Not yet finished, the youth cleaned all trash along both sides of the highway from Colonia Dublán to Colonia Juárez, a distance of nearly fifteen miles. When President Hinckley came to dedicate the new temple on March 6 and 7, 1999, he was touched by the area's beauty and cleanliness. It was obvious that all the Saints, young and old, loved their temple and, in giving their all, had made a sacred offering to the Lord. Their selfless gift helped establish the beautiful small temple as the pattern of "The House of the Lord" that would literally dot the earth.[12]

1 "Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention, of Converts, and Missionary Service," *Ensign,* Nov. 1997, 49.

2 "This is a Day Long Looked Forward to" (text of the dedicatory prayer for the Colonia Juárez Chihauhua Mexico Temple, Mar. 6, 1999, *Church News,* Mar. 113, 1999, 7.

3 Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward With Faith, The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 325.

4 Ibid.

5 F. Keith Stepan, Personal Journal, Unpublished manuscript.

6 "Of Mission, Temples and Stewardship," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 4–5.

7 F. Keith Stepan, Personal Journal, Unpublished manuscript.

8 Dell Van Orden, "Inspiration Came for Smaller Temples," *Church News,* August 1,1998.

9 F. Keith Stepan, Personal Journal, Unpublished manuscript.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

"Off in the distance, I saw a man riding a white horse"

Greg Hill was the interior designer responsible for the design and placement of furnishings for the Colonia Juárez Temple. In his Salt Lake office, he had pondered for several weeks the question of which works of art should be hung in each of the rooms of the new temple. As the featured painting for the temple lobby, he was led to choose a print of Harold Hopkinson's well-known painting, "The Prophet Reins His Horse, Just One Last Look on Fair Nauvoo," which shows Joseph on a white horse looking back towards the city he loved.

In due course Brother Hill traveled to Colonia Juárez to oversee the process of furnishing the temple. He was hanging the Harold Hopkinson print in the temple lobby when he was approached by a tearfully emotional sister who told him the following story: "A former bishop, long ago, lost his wife to cancer. After some time, he remarried. His new wife was a lovely woman, but she was not a member of the Church. Despite her lack of interest in learning more, this sister was apparently taught by several pairs of missionaries over the next few years. Then one day, while riding her horse along the ridges of the narrow Colonia Juárez valley, this sister saw, off in the distance, a man riding a white horse. She did not know the man, and the experience was a little disturbing because just as she realized she knew of no one in the area with a white horse, the man seemed to vanish without a trace.

"Months later, while sitting through another missionary lesson, she recognized in a picture the missionaries were showing her the very man she had seen that day riding along the valley's ridge—riding in the spot where the temple would be built. The sister soon acquired a strong testimony of the gospel's truthfulness and was baptized, often sharing her experience with others."

The art print the missionaries had shown this sister was a smaller version of the same one Greg Hill had chosen for the temple lobby. The experience became for him a testimony of the Lord's interest in the small details of his Church and his great love for all his children.

ART BY HAROLD HOPKINSON





First Band in Colonia Juárez

Academia Juárez

Our Alma Mater, hail to thee, thy praise we sing!
Thy sons and daughters here their homage pay,
We'll make thy glory known
Through every land and zone
By deeds of worth, by acts of valor done,
And naught but fame thy name shall know.

CHORUS
Then cheer today for the J.S.A.
We've come to work, we mean to stay.
We'll raise thy standard, win the day.
Hip, hip, hurray! for the J.S.A.

With hearts and hands we'll join to raise thy standard high.
Thy colors fair shall e'er unsullied be,
We'll ever pray for thee
Our hearts are brave and free,
Thy precepts rare shall e'er remembered be
And naught but praise thy name shall know.

The official school song of the Juárez Stake Academy.
Written by Guy C. Wilson, music by Arthur J. Done.